THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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READERS' AWARDS
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JANUARY 2018 ISSUE 249

ICE ICE BABY
Torvill and Dean chat ahead of Dancing On Ice

NEW YEAR NEW YOU
What changes will you make in 2018?

+

VIRAL
SCENE
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WHAT'S ON
COMPETITIONS

GOING GAGA
Lady Gaga brings Joanne Tour to Brum

Partied hard?
Why not make getting a sexual health check-up a New Year's resolution.
We're open 7 days a week
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Birmingham LGBT's Sexual Health Services Team
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What's inside:

Life's A Drag! 16
Miss Penny admits to being a very bad girl...

Ice, Ice Baby 28
Torvill and Dean chat ahead of Dancing On Ice's return

Going Gaga 41
Lady Gaga brings her Joanne World Tour to Birmingham

ALSO INSIDE:

Have Ya Heard? 5
Local Life Story 8
New Year New You 14
Pride events for 2018 26
What's On Scene 32
Arts & Culture 41
Out On The Scene 44
Competitions 57
Gadgets 59
Munch 61
Stephen Spinks Column 63
Cat's Corner 64
Steve Ball Column 65
Viral 66

Part of What's On MEDIA GROUP

Offices:
Wynner House,
Bromsgrove St,
Birmingham B5 6RG
and
13-14 Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury, SY2 6AE

Get connected... @midlandszone @midlandszone

Editor-in-Chief & Publisher: **Martin Monahan** Editor: **Ryan Humphreys** ryan@midlandszone.co.uk 01743 281722
Sales & Marketing: **Lei Woodhouse** lei@midlandszone.co.uk 01743 281703 **Chris Horton** chris.horton@midlandszone.co.uk 01743 281704
Admin/Subscriptions: **Adrian Parker** adrian.parker@midlandszone.co.uk 01743 281714 Managing Director: **Davina Evans**
Graphic Designers: **Lisa Wassell, Chris Atherton** Accounts Administrator: **Julia Perry** julia@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281717

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New Year, New You!

Looking to be more sociable and make more friends this year?

Come to Gaylife's Men's Group! A support and social group for gay and bisexual men aged 18 and over.

Every Wednesday, 7 - 9.30pm at The Piccadilly Centre in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.

LGBT COMMUNITY GayLife STOKE-ON-TRENT

Find more information online

lgbtstoke.co.uk Gaylife Stoke @GaylifeStoke

Have ya heard?

Birmingham Pride 2018: Early Buy tickets now on sale

Early Buy tickets for the UK's biggest two-day Pride festival, Birmingham Pride, are now on sale at a heavily discounted rate.
With prices currently starting at just £13.50 per day or £20.75 for the whole weekend (excluding booking fee), there's no better time to book your tickets for the popular LGBT event.
Whilst 2018's acts have yet to be announced, the festival annually attracts over 50,000 people and last year featured performances from, among many others, Dua Lipa, Basement Jaxx, Gabrielle, Sigala and Jonas Blue.
Visit birminghampride.com to get your Early Buy tickets today!

The Vengaboys are coming! Pride gig announced!

Birmingham Pride may not be taking place until the May Spring Bank Holiday weekend, but that hasn't stopped the city's biggest gay club, The Nightingale, announcing the first act of its Pride Weekend line-up - and yes, it's Dutch Eurodance group Vengaboys!
Appearing live on stage on Saturday 26 May, with support from LGBT club night Glittershit, the We Like To Party superstars will be keeping you in the Pride spirit all night.
The Nightingale has already released tickets starting at £11 for the Saturday, but for just £1 more, you can get your hands on a Super Early Bird Weekend Pass, incorporating entry to the venue on Friday 25, Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 May.
Get your tickets from nightingaleclub.co.uk.

PrEP Impact Trial begins in Leicester

A limited PrEP Impact Trial has begun in Leicester for people in all groups considered to be at high risk of acquiring HIV.

The groups are men who have sex with men, trans men and trans women, HIV-negative people who have HIV-positive partners who are not on effective treatment, and heterosexual people who are considered to be at a high risk.
Places on the trial will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis - so if you wish to take part, call 0300 124 0102 or 0800 318 908 (freephone), stating that you want to participate in the PrEP Impact Trial.
For more information, contact Trade Sexual Health on 0116 254 1747 or visit tradesexualhealth.com.

Joanna Lumley brings solo show to the Midlands

Joanna Lumley is heading out on her first-ever live tour in the autumn.
The popular actress, who became a household name when she starred in 1970s TV action series The New Avengers, will take her It's All About Me show on a 30-date UK tour, en route stopping off at Birmingham's Symphony Hall and Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit ticketmaster.co.uk

New community group for Telford LGBTs

A new LGBT community group has been launched in Telford, Shropshire.
The group will hold monthly public meetings and also have a presence on Facebook to facilitate online discussion.
It's hoped that the new group will kickstart a programme of meetings and events that fosters interaction between LGBT-plus people and their allies in the Telford vicinity.
To get involved, search for 'Telford LGBT+' on Facebook, follow @telfordlgbt on Twitter, or email telfordlgbt@virginmedia.com.

New rules make it easier for gay men to give blood...

Last month saw new rules come into effect which have made it easier for gay and bisexual men to give blood in England, Scotland and Wales.
Until now, in order to reduce 'the risk of HIV contamination', blood donation rules across the UK have banned men who have sex with men from donating blood if they've been sexually active during the previous 12-month period.
Following advances in HIV screening technology, however, changes were recommended to reduce the 12-month deferral period to just three months.
It now means that gay and bisexual men are able to donate blood if they abstain from sex for three months.
Ruth Hunt, Chief Executive Officer at Stonewall, said: "We're pleased to see the Government and NHS Blood & Transplant Service respond to the Freedom To Donate campaign in such a promising way.
"Reducing the deferral period makes it easier for gay and bi men who want to donate blood, and that's an important step forward. However, there's still work to do, as many gay and bi men will still be excluded from donating.
"To avoid this, we'd like to see the introduction of an individualised risk assessment of blood donors, which would allow more people to donate safely, regardless of their sexual orientation.
"We will continue to work with the Government and other organisations to create a fairer system for gay and bi men who want to donate blood."

Last chance to see SHOUT exhibition at MAC Birmingham

One of SHOUT Festival's most critically acclaimed exhibitions finishes its run at MAC Birmingham on Tuesday 2 January - so if you haven't yet seen it, it's time to get your skates on!
Marking the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of male homosexuality in England and Wales, We Often Find It Necessary To Keep Our Homosexuality Quiet features documentary photography charting the history of the Gay Liberation Front in Birmingham during the 1970s.
Told through the camera lens of one of the group's members, Ian Sanderson, the exhibition provides an intimate and powerful snapshot of the city's queer history.
Be sure to see it before it closes on the 2nd!

Have ya heard?

1 in 5 men think they're HIV-negative despite never taking a test

The men's sexual health study, the largest of its kind, showed that gay and bi men's awareness of HIV, testing, and PrEP is dangerously low.

Overall, 19% of men who think that they are HIV-negative have never actually taken an HIV test.

Men's health charity GMFA surveyed gay and bisexual men this year as part of its 'How Risky Am I?' programme.

The project was designed to help men find out their sexual health score and receive free information and advice on HIV testing and treatment.

Out of the 9,000 gay and bi men surveyed, 20% have never had a sexual health screening.

And only 26% said they "always" use a condom when they have anal sex.

22% were unaware of what 'viral loads' means, while nearly one in four did not know that people who are HIV-undetectable cannot pass on the virus.

The results were released after World AIDS Day, which aims to raise knowledge about the fight against HIV.

Awareness of PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), the anti-viral medication taken by those who are HIV-negative to lower the risk of contracting the virus, is a crucial part of this knowledge base.

But 24% of the men did not know what PrEP was.

Hit Oscar Wilde comedy heads for the Midlands

A brand new production of classic Oscar Wilde comedy The Importance Of Being Earnest is visiting two Midlands venues this spring as part of a UK tour.

Produced by the Original Theatre Company and starring Gwen Taylor as Lady Bracknell and Susan Penhaligon as Miss Prism, the show stops off at the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford, from Monday 5 to Saturday 10 February. It then visits the Lichfield Garrick Theatre from Tuesday 27 to Saturday 31 March.

Matthew Bourne top pick of Birmingham Hippodrome Spring programme

Matthew Bourne's Cinderella, spectacular Bollywood musical Taj Express and West End phenomenon The Play That Goes Wrong are among the shows visiting Birmingham Hippodrome this year.

Commenting on the venue's recently announced spring season, Hippodrome Artistic Director & Chief Executive Fiona Allan said: "Many of the stories you'll see on our stage this year feature strong female characters. From Elphaba and Glinda in Wicked, to Puccini's tragic Tosca, to everyone's favourite schoolgirl, Matilda. We also have stories of real women who had huge impact on the world around them - Carole King's story unfolds in Beautiful and Ballet British Colombia return with a programme of three breathtaking modern dance pieces, all by internationally acclaimed female choreographers."

For more information about these and the venue's other 2018 shows, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

Local Life Story

Name: Jack Lovell

Occupation: Musical Director of Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra (BGSO)

Place of birth: Bridgwater, Somerset

Star sign: Aquarius

Age: 26

About Jack

Where did you grow up?

Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset.

Single or attached?

Attached. Engaged to the love of my life, Seb.

What makes you happy?

My fiancé, my family, good food and good wine. In that order.

What makes you sad?

Other people's ignorance and fear of the unknown.

What makes you angry?

Bad manners! There are no excuses for being rude.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

To be more organised and less forgetful!

What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done in your life?

I can't really think of anything particularly embarrassing - presumably I've forgotten it. But the craziest, most nerve-wracking thing I've done is propose to Seb on stage in the middle of a BGSO concert.

Would you consider getting married in the future?

Me and Seb are currently working out what it is we want to do. I'm just so proud that we have the choice!

Coming Out

When did you first know you were gay?

I'm pretty sure I've always been gay, but I probably knew something was different back at primary school. It wasn't until secondary school that I really knew what it was and started coming out to people.

When did you come out?

Year 9/10, I think, but only very gradually. By sixth form, I was out to friends, and by university the closet was far behind me.

What was school like for you as a gay teenager?

Actually pretty good. I can only remember a couple of negative occasions during school, and even then I knew it wasn't that bad. If I hadn't been gay, then the same people would've been picking on me for being short, or wearing glasses, or playing in the orchestra. They're all just ignorant people who I hope now regret acting so childishly.

Who was the first person you told you were gay, and what was their reaction?

I honestly can't remember! But I don't think I've ever had a negative reaction to coming out. My friends and family have all been amazing, and I know I'm very lucky to have had that support.

What would you say to a youngster trying to come to terms with their own sexuality?

Talk to people, ask lots of questions and only come out when you're ready. It doesn't have to be all glitter and fireworks. If that isn't your personality, take your time.

Have you ever had any experiences with the opposite sex?

I have, and I don't regret it at all. It's part of what makes me me.

The BGSO

When did you first learn to play an instrument?

I started on piano when I was five or six. Then I started to learn the tenor horn at primary school - just because my friend did and I was jealous! I then took up the cello and switched to the French horn when I went to sixth form. I then started conducting at university and totally caught the conducting bug!

When did you join the BGSO?

I joined in the spring of 2012 as their

Quickfire

Who's your favourite actor?

It's split. Russell Tovey or Channing Tatum.

What's your favourite book?

The Life Of Pi.

Half empty or half full?

Half full.

What's your favourite food?

Pizza.

And how about your favourite drink?

Red wine.

Madonna or Lady Gaga?

Madonna.

If you could take a selfie with one person, alive or dead, who would it be?

Stephen Fry.

music director. I've had five fantastic years working with some of the most amazing people.

What are the challenges?

First and foremost it's the music. Classical music isn't easy, and a large part of my job is helping the players get to grips with the dots on the page, as well as making it sound like a musical whole.

What are the highlights?

My first inclination is to say the concerts. They're always so well received, and the orchestra really steps up to the plate and plays better than they ever have before. I've been known to cry with pride whilst conducting this amazing orchestra. But actually, the best things are the small victories - helping someone work out how to play or do something, eating homemade cake in the break with great friends, sharing a glass of wine after rehearsals, getting excited about future projects.

How does BGSO help the local LGBT community?

We provide an alternative to the usual scene. Be it for players or audiences, the BGSO is just one of many things you can enjoy with other people that show just how open-minded and exciting Birmingham is!

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

I have absolutely no idea, but so long as I'm married and making music with friends, I know I'll be happy.

Gay Scene

How long have you been frequenting the Midlands gay scene?

Since I came to university here in 2009. Back then, I would probably visit the Nightingale only a handful of times a year.

And what's been your fondest memory of the scene?

Drinking gin & tonics with my fiancé and my mum in The Village, having been to see Take That. Such good fun!

Who's your favourite cabaret act on the scene?

I don't go often enough to have a favourite. But I think they're all fabulous!

Who's your favourite person on the scene?

Again, I'm not out often enough to really have a favourite. But I think anyone who's creating safe and exciting places in which LGBT-plus people can be happy and comfortable is doing something really great. Whether that's clubs, cabaret nights, cafés or restaurants, I'm very proud to have a scene like ours in Birmingham.

What do you most enjoy about the scene?

I enjoy eating good food with a nice glass of wine in stylish surroundings.

What have you noticed about the way the scene's changed over the years?

I've not been here long enough to really notice much change, but things are definitely getting classier.

How would you change the scene?

More LGBT art and theatre events. Let's bring culture and socialising together.

Time Out

Where do you like to go on a night out?

'Spoons. I'm classy like that. Or maybe The Loft for food and a few drinks with friends

What do you do to relax?

Have a bath, or watch a good film while slouching on the sofa.

What do you enjoy on telly?

W1A, which has me laughing and crying in equal measure. But nothing beats a good drama.

What was the last track or album you bought or downloaded?

Tchaikovsky's Complete Ballets by André Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra. Such epic music!

Which one website do you spend the most time on?

Facebook, without a doubt.

What type of holiday do you prefer?

Skiing. Sun, snow and sensational views.

An exhibition exploring sexuality, gender and identity at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

As the UK celebrates 50 years since the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967, new exhibition **Coming Out: Sexuality, Gender And Identity** explores how shifting attitudes towards the LGBT experience have influenced visual art. Part of a three-year national partnership between the Arts Council Collection and four UK galleries, the show has come to Birmingham fresh from its opening at Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery.

Among the pieces which have joined the show for the Brum leg of its tour is Grayson Perry's Claire's Coming Out Dress, which he designed and wore to mark his entry into the art world as a transvestite. The dress is being shown alongside his 1996 ceramic Who Am I?, marking stages in Perry's personal journey. Local artists also get a look in, notably with three prints by Birmingham photographer Vanley Burke, capturing scenes from a Pride demonstration called in protest against the infamous 1988 Section 28 Act.

An extensive engagement programme runs alongside the exhibition. Check out the accompanying shows below...

Postcards With A Purpose

Postcards With A Purpose, explains Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG), "is a bold and moving project in association with Birmingham LGBT. We are fortunate to be linked with members of the community that either remember a time before decriminalisation, or were directly affected by the legislation. On the postcards provided, you can anonymously ask questions, share comments or write a message to these individuals. Your comments will be forwarded on and recipients will be invited to anonymously reply. These replies will be shared in our learning space in an ongoing conversation, evolving and changing as more people take part."

BMAG, until 15 April

Drag And Draw
Drag artist Naz, dressed in all her finery, is the life model for this special drawing session. She will also be performing during her breaks from posing.
The fantastic light in the gallery makes for a perfect drawing space, so why not join other likeminded artists, sketchers and visitors to take part. Paper, pencils and boards are provided, with easels and seats as required. Alternatively bring in your own sketchpad or just enjoy the performance and meet Naz
BMAG, 17 February

Rainbow Family Fun
Advertised by BMAG as 'a fun, free and great way to see the gallery through a rainbow', these special family friendly sessions offer the chance to view artwork via kaleidoscopes and rainbow glasses. Volunteers will be on hand to help make rainbows using prisms. Visitors will be challenged to find a special artwork called Fragment Of A Rainbow VI, a 2011 piece by Gary Hume that's 'high above you in the gallery and really cool'. **BMAG, 19 - 23 February**

Outing The Past
Featuring an afternoon of talks and presentations, Outing The Past provides a rare opportunity to learn more about LGBT history from the people who've lived it. "Be inspired by real histories in a relaxed atmosphere of art," suggests BMAG. "Learn from others and share some of the nation's most powerful and provocative artworks by internationally renowned artists from the Arts Council Collection."
BMAG, 24 February

Kings Of Birmingham
This thought-provoking, adults-only day, inspired by the artwork of Catherine Opie, offers you the chance to take part in male drag, learn how to contour and shape your face, change your walk and voice, or use a walk-in wardrobe of male historical looks to complete your drag. All materials, costumes and makeup are provided in a warm and inclusive atmosphere. Ladies, gentlemen, non-binary and friends of all varieties are welcome to attend. **BMAG, 5 March**

ICE ICE BABY

Dancing On Ice Live Tour comes to Birmingham

Ice skating superstars Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean found worldwide fame at the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, where they memorably took gold with their spectacular free programme, performed to the music of Maurice Ravel's Boléro. In more recent times, they returned to the limelight in ITV1's Dancing On Ice, a series that's back on our screens this very month following a four-year break. Jayne and Chris are back too, and will also be heading out on tour with the live version of the show. Zone caught up with the dynamic duo to find out more...

Dancing On Ice returns to ITV this month following a four-year hiatus. How will it differ from previous years?

Jayne: For us personally, the big difference is that we're actually going to be judging on the show. Chris and I are head judges. In the past, we've been responsible for choreographing all the routines for the celebrities as well as the opening numbers and our own routines. This time, workload wise, it's a lot less - but then we have that pressure on Sunday night to come up with the right points and the right decisions. It's quite different for us. We're really excited that it's coming back. It was a big part of our lives, and one that was very much missed in that January, February, March period of the year. It left quite a big void for a lot of people. We've had such positive feedback from people after hearing that it's coming back.

The 2014 edition was due to be the last show. Why the return?

Christopher: That's when we kind of retired, you might say. But having retired for a year or so, we got itchy feet again. We're really happy that it's coming back and really excited about the new role.

Following the increase in reality TV programmes, is there pressure to compete with other shows?

Christopher: I think everybody compares everything - but from our point of view, the show is unique. It's the only show on TV now that has all the jeopardy involved. It's a skill to be learned, to be able to do it in any competent way.

Jayne: At the same time, it's entertaining as well. It's a family show that everyone can sit down and enjoy.

Which celebrity surprised you the most in previous shows?

Christopher: We had the likes of Ray Quinn, who was just unique - he just seemed to be able to skate. If he'd been a skater from early on, I think he would've been a champion - he just had a natural ability on the ice. He really blew everybody away. There's the likes of Hayley Tamaddon too, who brought all her theatrical performance to the ice, which really moved people. Then there were sports people like Beth Tweddle.

Who are you looking forward to seeing on the ice this year?

Christopher: I'm a big Corrie fan, so I'm looking forward to seeing Brooke.

Jayne: I'm looking forward to seeing all the boys because on all the pictures, none of them have got their shirts on!

What are you looking forward to most about the Dancing On Ice UK tour?

Jayne: We've hosted before, but we're going to be hosting and judging, so pretty busy!

Will you be skating on the tour?

Christopher: We haven't hung up our boots yet. It's more than a maybe.

How active are you both on the ice nowadays?

Christopher: I never leave the ice. I live in America and coach and choreograph out there. I've been working with a lot of Olympic skaters this year, so I'm really looking forward to seeing their progress in the Olympics. Jane has had her skates on a little less.

Jayne: Where I live, I'm not close to an ice rink - it's about a two-hour drive to get to a rink, which takes a whole chunk out of your day.

What's the most important piece of advice you'd give to a budding ice skater?

Jayne: We always say bend your knees so that you lower your centre of gravity.

Christopher: Skating is all about bending the knees. It's a different feeling from ballet - you've got to bend down and get the glide.

Is ice skating as popular as it used to be?

Jayne: Oh, definitely! When the first series of Dancing On Ice came out, there were people flocking to local ice rinks. From that, over the years, more and more seasonal rinks are popping up around the country. They're continuing to pop up because the skating and the social side of it has become really, really popular.

Christopher: They have one in the centre of Birmingham, don't they? And in London, some of the rinks you actually have to book in advance.

What have been the highlights of your career?

Jayne: Obviously winning the Olympics was a massive highlight. Having a gold medal puts you in a special club and opens up lots of doors for the future. It certainly did for us. We've had lots of opportunities and enjoyed real longevity... Another highlight was going back to Sarajevo 30 years on, which is what we did in 2014, and being able to perform Bolero again in the same rink - it had actually been bombed but rebuilt - in front of a crowd of people who were so excited that we'd gone back there.

Christopher: We've also been given OBEs, which we're very humbled about.

What would be your dream project?

Christopher: I'd like to put on a skating show in a permanent theatre space, custom built with all the whizzes and bangs that the Cirque Du Soleil has.

Jayne: I could help him with that!

What's the secret of your longstanding friendship and professional partnership?

Christopher: Tolerance! No, I'm being funny there.

Jayne: We never got married - I think that was a good thing!

Christopher: I think you said it - it's friendship.

Torvill & Dean's Dancing On Ice Live Tour visits Arena Birmingham from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 April

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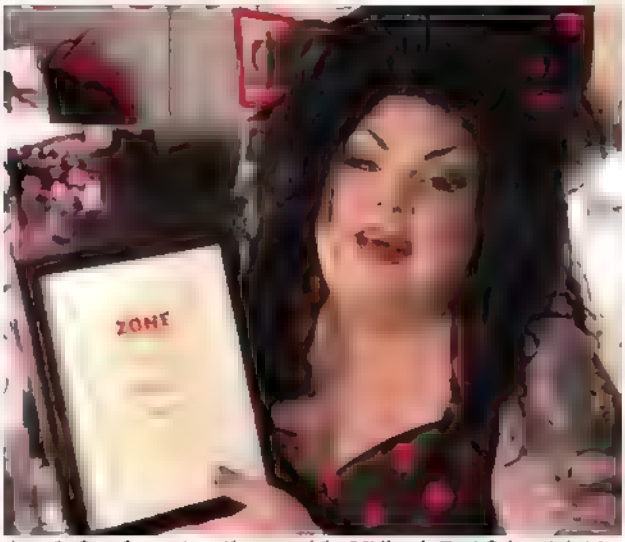
IT'S TIME TO VOTE!

The Midlands Zone **Readers' Awards** are back for 2018!

Yes, folks, it's that Midlands Zone Readers' Awards time of year again! We all have our favourite Midlands gay bars, clubs, stores, people, personalities and charities - and this is your chance to show how much you appreciate them. Nominate and vote for your favourites, to help them secure a title worthy of their work!



Amy LaQueefa receives the award for Midlands Best Cabaret Act in last year's Zone Readers' Awards.

Every year, thousands of you step up to the plate and vote for your favourites in the Midlands LGBT community. And if you want to do the same in 2018, you've only got until Monday 15 January to take part in the first round of voting!
Once we publish the February issue, we will be re-opening the voting and asking you to select from the TOP FIVE in each category.

All votes must be submitted online before Wednesday 28 February

And don't forget to enter our **FREE PRIZE DRAW** for your chance to win a whopping £1,000 in cash! To enter, simply vote online and then complete our online readership survey

The results of the Midlands Zone Readers' Awards will be announced at an awards ceremony in March.

Keep 'em peeled for more information!

HOW TO VOTE:

SIMPLY LOG ON TO:

www.midlandszone.co.uk

The top finalists in each category will be selected on **MONDAY 15 JANUARY**. Their names will be published in the February issue. The voting will then continue until Wednesday 28 February.

THIS YEAR'S CATEGORIES

Best Birmingham Gay Nightclub
Best Midlands Gay Nightclub (Outside B'ham)
Best Birmingham Gay Bar
Best Midlands Gay Bar (Outside B'ham)
Best Midlands Community Pub/Bar
Best Midlands Café Bar/Restaurant
Best Midlands Overall Gay Venue
Best Midlands Venue for Men
Best Midlands Venue for Women
Best Midlands Live Entertainment Venue
Best Midlands Gay Venue - Outdoor Area
Best Midlands One-Nighter
Best New Midlands Gay Venue
Best Midlands LGBT Pride Event
Best Midlands LGBT Event
Midlands LGBT Charity/Group of Achievement
Midlands LGBT Social/Sports Group
Midlands LGBT Personality of the Year
Best Midlands Compere/Host
Best Midlands Cabaret Act
Best National Cabaret Act
Midlands Friendliest Bar Person
Midlands LGBT Venue with the Friendliest Bar Staff
Midlands Friendliest Security Person
Midlands LGBT Venue with the Best Security Staff
Midlands Bar DJ
Midlands Club DJ
Midlands Gay Sauna/Health Club
Midlands LGBT Friendly Store or Online Store
Youth Achievement Award
Lifetime Achievement Award
Outstanding Contribution to the LGBT Community

To enter the free prize draw for £1,000, simply VOTE and complete our **Readership Survey**, and we'll select a lucky winner at random!

Life's a Drag!

Miss Penny admits to being such a bad girl...

.zone.co.uk

During 2017, I munched my way through no fewer than 365 Greggs sausage rolls, which I think you'll agree is far too much sausage for any girl. I'm hoping to change my ways in 2018 and replace my seven inches of pork with a healthier option.
I've decided to take to the kitchen to create my very own alternative, which I now want to share with all of you Midlands Zone readers. So in 2018, if I'm not getting my usual good porking, I'm at least going to keep it spicy with my Chilli Turkey Rolls. Let's hope I can keep it up!

Ingredients

1 cup (70g) fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs
500g turkey breast mince
1 egg, plus 1 extra lightly beaten egg
1 zucchini, finely grated
1 carrot, finely grated
1/2 onion, grated
1/4 cup chopped coriander leaves
1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
4 sheets frozen puff pastry, just thawed
1/2 a teaspoon of chilli flakes
Tomato or sweet chilli or sauce, optional, to serve

Method

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 200°C and line two baking sheets with baking paper.

Step 2: Process crumbs, turkey and unbeaten egg in a food processor until well combined. Place in a bowl, mix well with vegetables, herbs and chilli flakes, then season.

Step 3: Place one pastry sheet on a floured surface and halve. Spoon an eighth of the mixture lengthways along the centre of each piece. Fold over one edge of pastry and tuck in beside filling, then fold over the other side to make a roll, pressing down lightly to seal. Repeat with remaining pastry and filling
Cut rolls into 3cm pieces and make two small incisions in each roll to prevent splitting. Place on baking sheets, cover and chill for 30 minutes. Brush with beaten egg. Bake for 25-30 minutes until the rolls are lightly browned and cooked through. Serve with sauce on the side.

Enjoy!
Miss P x

activate

GET ACTIVE AND KEEP ACTIVE WITH BIRMINGHAM LGBT

WANT TO SET UP A NEW LGBT SPORTS GROUP?

TALK TO US!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

W birminghamlgbt.org.uk
T 0121 643 0821
birminghamlgbt

Birmingham LGBT

SPORT ENGLAND

Kick-start those NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS!

You've over-indulged at Christmas, and your New Year's resolution is to get yourself down to the gym, get fit and work towards that body you've always dreamed of...

1 Recruit a friend

Working out with a friend not only stops you from feeling alone and isolated in your fitness programme, it also provides a sense of competition, which is a great way to stay motivated.

2 Set reasonable goals

No one is going to turn into Channing Tatum overnight. Set reasonable and achievable goals that you can meet. Nothing is more demotivating than feeling you've failed.

3 Don't worry about slipping up

We all have slip-ups, be it a party or just a bad day which has us reaching for the chocolate. Don't worry about it, get back on the wagon the next day and carry on.

4 Eat breakfast

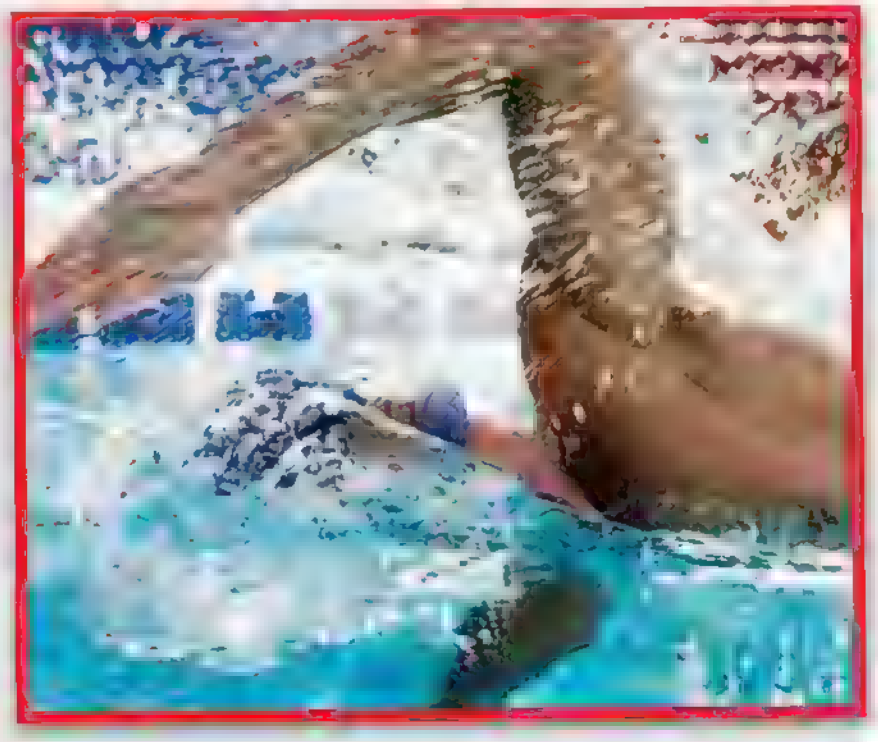
Eating breakfast helps to give your metabolism a kick-start. Think of the metabolism like a fire; by having a breakfast rich in nutrients and complex carbohydrates, you stoke the flames and set yourself up for the day ahead.

5 Choose exercise you enjoy

Don't force yourself to perform exercises you don't like. Simply put, you won't stick with them. Anything that raises your heart rate is a cardio exercise - so if you love to dance, take a dance class, if you like to swim, then swim. Making sure that you enjoy your workouts is a great way to keep you going back for more.

6 Up the ante

It takes six weeks for the body to adapt to exercise. Once this has happened, you need to increase the intensity of your workout to ensure continued progress. This can be done by moving faster, or for longer, or by lifting greater weight or changing the exercise - anything to challenge the body again.



7 Stretch

The pain and postural problems caused by overly tight muscles can put you out of action for weeks. You can prevent this by making sure you get into the habit of stretching, both after you warm-up and at the end of your workout.

8 Ditch processed foods

It's so important to fuel your body properly while following a fitness programme. You're putting your body under stress, and need to put something good back into it. Think wholemeal, unrefined carbohydrates, as well as lean proteins such as skinless chicken and fish, plus plenty of fruit and vegetables.

9 Quantify things

Take measurements, whether they be body measurements or resting heart rate. Having something that you can monitor closely will allow you to observe changes that you might not otherwise notice.

10 Avoid fad diets

Anything that offers you a quick fix or seems too good to be true probably is, and may actually do you serious harm. Aim for a fat loss or muscle gain of around 1lb a week. Slow, steady progress is the best way to make safe, permanent changes to your lifestyle, to your body and to your mental attitude towards health and fitness.

The Long Road

13.1 miles of it, actually...

Zone Editor Ryan Humphreys is this year challenging himself to improve his fitness. Having signed up to run all 13.1 miles of the Half Marathon in June, he's determined to make the finishing line - and here's why...

Okay, to some of you, a half marathon may not be a big deal.
Some of you may even have managed the holy grail - the 26.2-mile full marathon... Not me, though; no.

Those who know me see a slim yet unfit chap who couldn't run for a bus, let alone for 13.1 miles. So what on earth possessed me to set myself the target of my hometown half marathon? Well, the answer, plain and simple, is belief. Or rather, the lack of it.

A bit of background about myself. I smoke just under 20 a day, I drink quite a bit more beer in a week than is recommended. And when I went to join the Army at the age of 16, I couldn't even run 1.5 miles (safe to say that dream died right there in Lichfield).

My colleague, Ross, a keen runner himself, began nagging me to sign up with him for his beloved running events.

Having routinely laughed at him and turned him down on a near-weekly basis, I suddenly thought, "Fuck it, why not?"

Later that day, I paid my entry fee for the Shrewsbury Half Marathon (Sunday 17 June). My friends, family and colleagues all laughed. Ryan, the beer-swilling, fag-puffing jack-the-lad couldn't possibly run a half marathon. "This'll be fun to watch!" they mocked.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is what's spurring me on...

I'm excited to cross that finish line in June and hold up the proverbial middle finger to the lot of them.

So where does one begin when going from a bar stool to a half marathon finish line?

The main thing which I worried would make my journey harder was my smoking. It was time to jack it in. At the time of going to print, I've not had a cigarette in 21 days. I've replaced the roll-ups with a vape - and I can feel the benefit already.

I've also cut down my alcohol intake, downloaded a run tracking app for my smartphone and bought some pretty snazzy running shoes.

So what about the actual running? Well, I've got a great training plan to follow - one of those 'couch to 5K' jobs. I aim to join my local parkrun by February. Then I'll ramp up the training to reach 10K by March (that's when the Mercedes-Benz of Shrewsbury 10K takes place). From there, I will hopefully graduate to running 13.1 miles by the time the dreaded half marathon arrives in June.

It's not going to be easy and it's not going to be fun. And I'm probably going to want to give it all up, light a cigarette and swig a pint. But being able to prove my doubters wrong is the aim of the game - and if I can get fitter along the way, then that's got to be a bonus, right?

You'll be able to follow my journey occasionally online at midlandszone.co.uk. Or more frequently via Twitter - @RyanHumphreys.

It's going to be a comedy of errors - but I'm looking forward to the journey.

Ryan

Want to get running?

Birmingham Marathon to return after 2017's debut success

This year's Great Birmingham Run and Birmingham International Marathon will take place on Sunday 14 October

The Great Birmingham Run is firmly established as one of the most popular half-marathons in the country, while the Birmingham International Marathon will be taking place for a second time after debuting in 2017.

More than £4.1million was raised for local and national good causes by runners at last year's marathon and half marathon. Participants of all ages and abilities are invited to take part in the two autumn events, which see thousands of spectators lining the routes.

Visit greatrun.org/great-birmingham-run to sign up for the half marathon or greatrun.org/birmingham-international-marathon to sign up for the marathon.

Families can get involved in the October weekend of activity by participating in the Simplyhealth Junior and Mini Great Birmingham Runs, taking place on Saturday the 13th.

Midlands running diary

Telford 10K
Monday 1 January
telfordathleticclub.co.uk

Leicestershire Half Marathon
Sunday 11 February
leicestershirehalf.com

Warwick Half Marathon
Sunday 4 March
bhf.org.uk/warwick

Spring Shakespeare Marathon
Saturday 10 March
raceways.eu

Shrewsbury 10K
Sunday 18 March
shrewsbury10k.co.uk

Stafford Half Marathon
Sunday 18 March
staffordhalf.com

Leicester's Big 10K
Sunday 29 April
tampoevents.co.uk

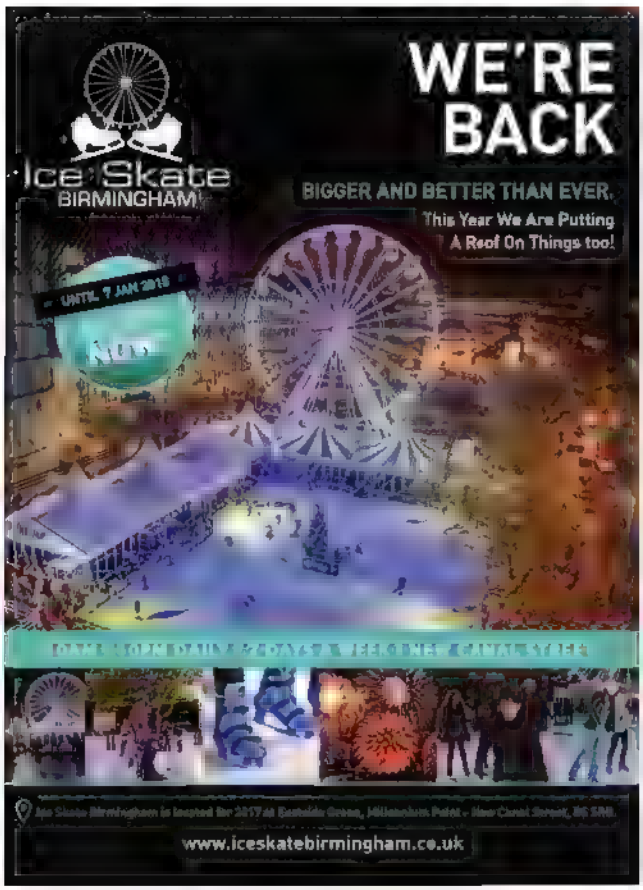
Uttoxeter Half Marathon
Sunday 6 May
uttoxeterroadrunners.club

Wolverhampton Inflatable 5K
Saturday 12 May
ukrunningevents.co.uk

Shrewsbury Half Marathon
Sunday 17 June
shrewsburyhalf.co.uk

Carver Wolverhampton Marathon
Sunday 2 September
carverwolverhampton marathonevents.co.uk

Rugby Santa Run
Saturday 1 December
randnac.org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Birmingham LGBT

The Henry Smith Charity

In an emergency
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999

Galop
National LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline
0300 999 5428

Respect
Men's Advice Line
0808 801 0327

Women's Aid & Refuge
24-hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline
0808 2000 247

LGBT people experience domestic violence too

ex partners and family members.

Domestic abuse isn't well recognised in the LGBT community.

Believe

Recognise
happen to them.

Know
experienced by their friends.

is no one there to support you

affects our communities too

If you are experiencing domestic abuse Please do not to suffer in silence

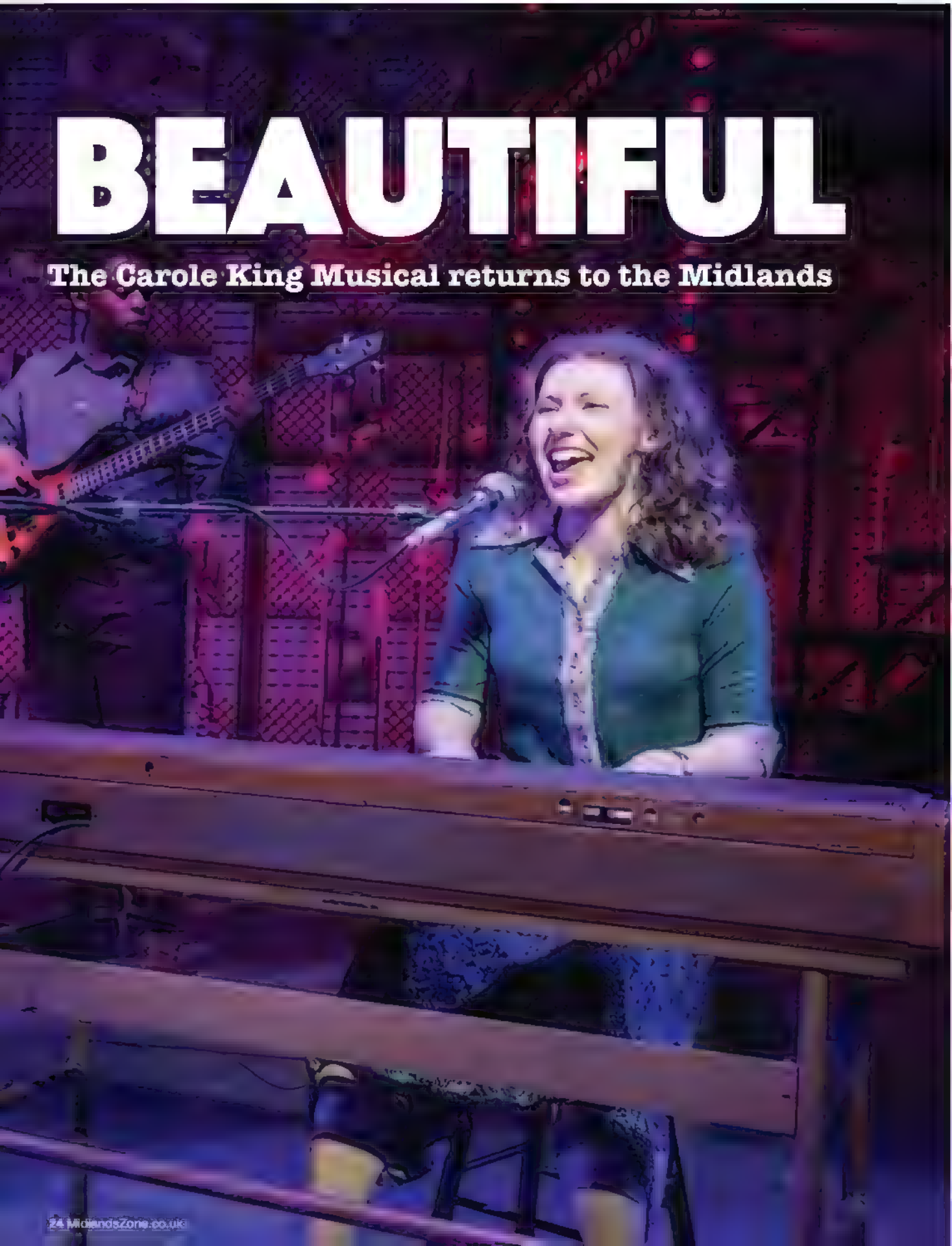
Birmingham LGBT provides specialist LGBT+ support to people experiencing domestic abuse.

asking to speak to one of our LGBT IDVAs (independent domestic

on **idva@blgbt.org**

BEAUTIFUL

The Carole King Musical returns to the Midlands



Having received much acclaim for its debut Midlands performance late last year, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical makes a welcome return to the region. Zone recently caught up with leading lady Bronte Barbe to find out more....

After kicking off its first ever UK tour late last year, smash-hit Carole King musical Beautiful enjoyed a warmly received run at Birmingham Hippodrome in November. But even If It's Over and you missed out, don't think that It's Too Late. Though touring may have taken the show Way Over Yonder and So Far Away, it turns out pretty soon it's Goin' Back - on Wednesday 31 January to be precise. It seems something told the Hippodrome it was into something good...

"It sold really well, and the theatre is so supportive of the work that arrives there," gushes Bronté Barbé, who takes over the tremendous task of playing Carole King from West End star Cassidy Janson. "They laid on a lovely welcome for us, and we had a great time in Birmingham. The audiences were fantastic!"

Telling the extraordinary story of the songwriter-turned performer's rise to fame, the show takes us through King's personal trials and tribulations: overcoming her own insecurities, kicking back against convention, and breaking into what was then a very male-dominated 1960s music industry.

"One of the first lines in the show is Carole's mum saying to her, 'Girls don't write music, they teach it,'" says Barbé "She was so brave at that time, to go into those offices to present her songs. What's amazing is that despite her insecurities, she had the determination to stick at it and get what she wanted, especially when she was so young."

Evidently, this 'Sweet Young Thing' 'Wasn't Born To Follow' - we know that she eventually plucked up the courage to enter the limelight and became a star in her own right. But as her relationship with husband and long term writing partner Gerry Goffin breaks down during the 12-year period the show covers, there's plenty of tugging at heartstrings before the feelgood finale

"I think Carole actually found it very hard to listen to the initial read throughs of the show, because in a way it was like living through it again. But then I know she later went to the Broadway show in disguise and absolutely loved it. She even ended up getting on stage to sing with the cast!

"It's a very different process playing a part like this. Because she's a real person, she's still alive and she worked so hard for this, you do want to honour her. I haven't met her and I don't know if I will - though I'd absolutely love to! - but I have watched lots of interviews and documentaries and videos of her, and I've read her book. So hopefully I'm living up to the task!"

The trick, you might say, is not to play her as your typical, emotionally demonstrative stock musical theatre character, but rather to make her feel like a Natural Woman. Paradoxically, though, seeming natural and spontaneous actually takes a lot of hard work and attention to detail, particularly when it comes to the vocals. With big fans of Carole King coming into theatres expecting to Feel The Earth Move, getting the singing right was always Going To Take Some Time...

"It was quite a long process because I wanted to get as close to Carole as I could without doing an impression, because that's not what it's about. So I listened to her intently for a long time, broke down what I thought were 'Carole-isms', wrote them out, put them in different places, and sang the songs over and over again with and without them."

For Barbé, as for many audience members, seeing the show for the first time in London was a real eye-opener Despite considering herself a fan, it wasn't until she saw friends performing in the West End production that she realised quite how prolific a songwriter King was.

"I had her album Tapestry on vinyl because my mum told me I had to get it when I first got a record player, and I just absolutely loved it. I probably overplayed it, actually. So I already thought she was fantastic, but I had no idea she'd written all of these other songs. I knew like The Locomotion and Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?. There's a huge back catalogue of songs in the show."

It's partly this that makes Beautiful stand out from the numerous other biopic-style jukebox musicals around in theatreland at present.

"There's no other show that I know of where one character can present a song and then a whole other group of characters can sing the same song without you getting bored of it. Like with Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?, I present it and then The Shirelles sing it in a completely different way. The combination of that and the fact that it isn't just about her and Gerry Goffin but also the other writing duo, Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann, means there's a great variety of music in the show."

For those of an age to remember when King first made it big, the music and nostalgia it inspires will surely be the main draw, with many coming just to hear that one special Song Of Long Ago. Yet there's more to it than that. Beautiful aims to be a show not just for one generation, but for Anyone At All, guaranteed to have you Dancing With Tears In Your Eyes.

"There's so much heart to the piece and it's so incredibly relatable that I think there's something for everyone. It's an amazing night! It's like a rock concert at the end - there's no other feeling like it!"

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical returns to Birmingham Hippodrome from Wed 31 January to Sat 3 February. The show then plays at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent from Tues 24 to Sat 28 April and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tues 12 to Sat 16 June

PRIDE 2018
UK Diary Dates

Here are just some of the amazing UK Pride events happening in 2018 - visit midlandszone.co.uk for full Pride dates across the UK as they are announced...

FEBRUARY

National Student Gay Pride
Friday 9 - Sunday 11 February
University Of Westminster / G-A-Y
studentpride.co.uk

Hampshire Pride
Saturday 24 February
Winchester
hampshirepride.com

MAY

Lancaster Pride
Saturday 19 May
Lancaster
lancasterpride.co.uk

Oxford Pride Festival
Friday 25 May - Sunday 3 June
Oxfordshire
oxford pride.org.uk

Grampian Pride
Saturday 26 May
Beach Blvd, Aberdeen
grampianpride.org

Birmingham Pride
Saturday 26 - Sunday 27 May
Birmingham Gay Village
birminghampride.com

Durham Pride
Monday 28 May
Durham Sands
durhamprideuk.org

JUNE

Blackpool Pride
Friday 8 - Sunday 10 June
Winter Gardens
blackpoolpridefest.co.uk

Flintshire Pride
Saturday 9 June
Theatr Clwyd, Mold, North Wales
flintshirepride.co.uk

Pride Canterbury
Saturday 9 June
Dane John Gardens
canterburypride.co.uk

Coventry Pride
Saturday 9 - Sunday 10 June
University Square, Priory Street
coventrypride.org.uk

York Pride
Saturday 9 - Sunday 10 June
Knavesmire (Tadcaster Road End)
yorkpride org.uk

Pride Edinburgh
Saturday 16 June
Edinburgh
prideedinburgh.org.uk

Essex Pride
Saturday 16 June
Central Park, Chelmsford
essexpride.org

Dublin LGBTQ Pride
Saturday 23 June
Merrion Square
dublinpride.ie

Exmouth Pride
Saturday 30 June
Manor Gardens
exmouthpride.co.uk

JULY

Sparkle in the Park
Friday 6 - Sunday 8 July
Sackville Gardens, Manchester
sparkle.org.uk

Pride in London
Saturday 7 July
Trafalgar Square
prideinlondon.org

Worksop Pride
Saturday 7 July
Old Market Square
worksoppride.co.uk

L Fest
Friday 13 - Monday 16 July
Bodafon Farm, Llandudno
lfest.co.uk

Bristol Pride
Saturday 14 July
Castle Park
pridebristol.co.uk

Rotherham Pride
Saturday 14 July
Clifton Park Bandstand
fb.com/RotherhamPride2018

Salford Pride
Saturday 14 July
Peel Park, Salford
pinkpicnic.org.uk

Isle Of Wight Pride
Saturday 20 July
Ryde Beach
iwpride.org

Newcastle Pride
Saturday 20 July
Town Moor
northern pride.com

Hull Pride
Saturday 21 July
Queens Gardens
prideinhull.co.uk

Chesterfield Pride
Sunday 22 July
Stand Road Park
fb.com/Chesterfieldpride

Norwich Pride
Saturday 28 July
The Forum
norwichpride.org.uk

Weston Super Mare Pride
Saturday 28 July
Grove Park
wsmpride.com

Liverpool Pride
Saturday 28 - Sunday 29 July
St George's Quarter
liverpoolpride.co.uk

AUGUST

Brighton Pride
Friday 3 - Sunday 5 August
Preston Park
brighton-pride.org

Leeds Pride
Sunday 5 August
Lower Briggate
leedspride.com

Happy Valley Pride
Tuesday 7 - Monday 13 August
Hebden Bridge
happyvalleypride.com

Chester Pride
Saturday 11 August
Castle Square
chesterpride.co.uk

Warwickshire Pride
Saturday 18 August
Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa
warwickshirepride.co.uk

Manchester Pride
Friday 24 - Monday 27 August
Canal Street
manchesterpride.com

Southampton Pride
Saturday 25 August
Guildhall Square & West Marlands Road
southamptonpride.org

Walsall Pride
Saturday 25 August
Gallery Square
fb.com/walsallprideofficial

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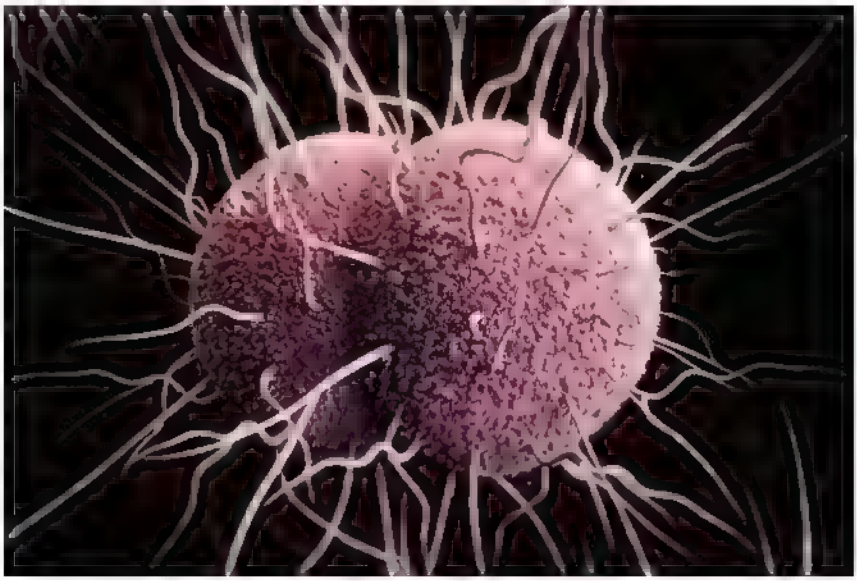
Have you got an unwanted Christmas present?

Unlike bad Christmas presents, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can't be returned with a gift receipt! But testing and treatment may be easier than you think. Our friends at Gay Life North Staffordshire tell us what to look out for and how to tackle anything you may have...



If something doesn't look, feel or smell right in your genital area, then you may have an STI. Itching, burning when you pee, sore/tender balls or discharge from the tip of the penis are common STI symptoms.
Some symptoms you might not even link with an STI; things like a flu like illness (an initial symptom of HIV) or a blotchy rash (a symptom of syphilis).

Many people don't notice any symptoms at all when they have an STI - chlamydia, syphilis and HIV may not show any initial symptoms. Our advice is, if you're sexually active, get tested after each sexual partner, or once a year if you're in a relationship, whether you notice symptoms or not.

The only way to know for certain that you don't have an STI is to take a test. A full STI test usually just involves a quick blood test and a urine sample, so it's probably a lot less scary than you think. If you have visible symptoms, a doctor or nurse may ask to take a look at the area or do a quick swab, but they won't do anything painful.
To get a full STI test, visit your nearest sexual health/GUM clinic. Services at sexual health clinics are completely confidential. In Stoke-on-Trent, you can also order a free at-home chlamydia test if you're aged between 16 and 24. Order yours at b-clear.org.uk.

Most STIs can be easily treated with a few tablets. Genital herpes and genital warts can't be cured, but you can get treatment to ease the symptoms during outbreaks. HIV is another virus which can't be cured yet, but current treatment is great.
If you're diagnosed as HIV positive, you'll be offered antiretroviral drugs and appointments with a specialist team. The treatment works by reducing the amount of the infection in your system, letting you lead a happy and healthy life
And if you're on effective treatment for HIV, you can't pass the virus on!

The best protection against STIs is condoms - and plenty of lube, to prevent the condom from tearing.
You can pick up condoms and lube for free from sexual health clinics, or you may be eligible for a C-Card in your local area, allowing you free and easy access to condoms from pharmacies and other places.
We recommend using condoms for oral sex and on sex toys. Dental dams are great for oral sex on a vagina or for rimming, and these are available for free at most sexual health clinics too.

To find out more about sexual health services in Stoke-on-Trent, visit staffordshireandstokecontrent.nhs.uk or lgbtstoke.co.uk

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BACK IN TIME!

Celebrating LGBT History Month in February

Having held two fantastic weekend-long LGBT history festivals in 2016 and '17, LGBT Shrewsbury is back with another packed programme for 2018 - but this time it's taking place across the whole month of February.

Organisers have called on members of the local LGBT community and their friends to contribute to the expanded programme, which features exhibitions, talks, films and workshops. There really is something for everyone.

Check out our top four events below, and keep an eye on the official website at shrewsburylgbthistory.org uk for more programme details - new events are being added on a regular basis!

LGBT Pottery Workshop

Monday 5 February, 7pm
The Hive | £18

This special workshop, led by Stephanie Kelly, provides participants with the chance to make A5-size pottery postcards depicting their own interpretation of LGBT themes, inspired by the LGBT Historical Walking Map of Shrewsbury. Their creation will be theirs to take home. It could also form part of a larger visual arts collection in the town.

Soldiers In Love

Thursday 8 February, 7:30pm
University Centre Shrewsbury | FREE

Based on numerous love letters between two servicemen, one of whom, Gilbert, was stationed at Park Hall Camp near Oswestry during WW2. Initially it seemed the letters were to Gilbert from a girlfriend with the initial 'G'. When the letters, dating from 1938, were transcribed, it became clear that they were between two men - infantrymen Gordon and Gilbert - detailing how their love was constrained by the moral and legal circumstances of the day

Tom Of Finland

Sunday 11 February, 7:30pm
Old Market Hall, The Square | Ticket price TBC

Touko Laaksonen returns home after a harrowing and heroic experience serving his country in World War Two. But life in Finland during peacetime proves equally distressing. He finds Helsinki rampant with persecution of the homosexual men around him, who are even being pressurised into marrying women and having children. Touko finds refuge in his liberating art, specialising in homoerotic drawings of muscular men, free of inhibitions

I Am Not Your Negro

Monday 19 February, 7:30pm
The Hive | £8/3

Told entirely in the words of James Baldwin through both personal appearances and the text of his final, unfinished book project, I Am Not Your Negro touches on the lives and assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr and Medgar Evers, bringing a powerful clarity to how the image and reality of Blacks in America today is fabricated and enforced... Narrated by Samuel L Jackson.

What's On

Mon 1 - Sun 7 January

Cabaret Returns with Lola Lasagne at The Village Inn

Kicking off a new year of cabaret at the award winning Village Inn in Birmingham is drag veteran Lola Lasagne. She'll be taking to the stage on the first Friday of January for a night of fun filled comedy and singalong magic. Why not start off 2018 in style with a great night out?

Friday 5 January - The Village Inn, Birmingham

Marty's Party heads to Coventry

Friday 5 January - The Yard, Coventry

Get the party started at the Gale

If you're looking for a great night out, The Nightingale in Birmingham is one of the best places to head for - particularly as they're offering you free admission before midnight every Saturday! Not only that, there's an all-night long £1 drinks list too, and music from a whole host of resident DJs! We'll be seeing you on the dancefloor!

Every Saturday - The Nightingale, Birmingham

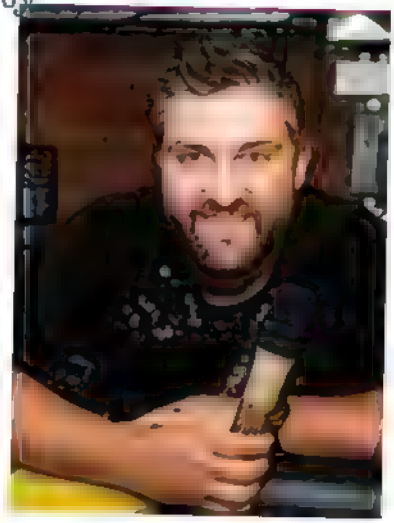
Ministry of Pound New Year's Special

Had an awesome New Year's Eve? Want to carry on the party? Then head to Birmingham's Missing Bar for 2018's first Ministry of Pound with Mike Emery. It's got all you need - £1 drinks and the best mixes of 2017 all night long!

Monday 1 January Missing, Birmingham

DJ Toni Lee gets the party started at Eden Bar!

If you're out in Birmingham's gay village on the first Saturday night of the month, check out award winning gay venue Eden Bar, where DJ Toni Lee will be on the decks. Toni's one of Manchester's most established (and funniest) resident DJs, so be sure to catch him and kickstart 2018 in style.



Saturday 6 January - Eden, Birmingham

MISS PENNY'S & AMY LAQUEEFA'S

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CABARET
& HOST

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15TH JAN

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THE VILLAGE INN

JANUARY 2018

WEEKDAYS

MONDAY'S - BINGO WITH QUEENY
GUARANTEED £100 EVERY WEEK & £1 DRINKS

TUESDAY'S - GINNY LEMON'S PICK & MIX

WEDNESDAY'S - C FACTOR WITH CHARLOTTE

THURSDAY'S - MISS PENNY VS MISS MARTY
ALTERNATIVE CABARET EACH WEEK - HAPPY HOUR TILL 2AM

SUNDAY'S - YSHEE BLACK'S STARS ON THE RISE
BRUMS NEWEST TALENT COMPETITION £1000 GRAND PRIZE

FREAKY FRIDAY CABARET

LOLA LASAGNE
FRIDAY 05

MISS PENNY
FRIDAY 12

MYRA DUBOIS
FRIDAY 19

SANDRA LONDON
FRIDAY 26

WWW.THEVILLAGEBIRMINGHAM.CO.UK

What's On

Mon 8 - Sun 14 January

It's time to get Pounded at the Nightingale!

Get Pounded every Thursday at Birmingham gay superclub the Nightingale! As well as £1 drinks offers galore, there's also the brand spanking new 'alternative and indie room' to enjoy, in the company of DJ Soriah. What's not to like?

Every Thursday
The Nightingale, Birmingham

Let's party with Miss Penny

Get the weekend party started with the one and only Miss Penny at The Village Inn in Birmingham. Expect a night of great cabaret featuring fun and games galore and risque comedy aplenty. Having a bad night is not an option!

Friday 12 January
The Village Inn, Birmingham

Miss Thunderpussy heads to The Yard

Continuing with its January line up of Friday night cabaret, The Yard in Coventry welcomes Miss Thunderpussy to the stage on the 12th. Expect a great show, with lots of laughs to boot! It's the perfect way to start the weekend

Friday 12 January - The Yard, Coventry

Karaoke and disco with DJ Nikki every Friday & Sunday at Eden

If you crave something a bit different from a typical night out in Brum's gay village, look no further than Eden Bar's ever-so-entertaining evening of karaoke and disco, complete with a winning contribution from the venue's very own DJ Nikki. Have you got the voice of an angel or maybe it's more like Honey G's? Whichever, the fun's certainly not in short supply, so get yourself along there asap!

Every Friday & Sunday - Eden, Birmingham

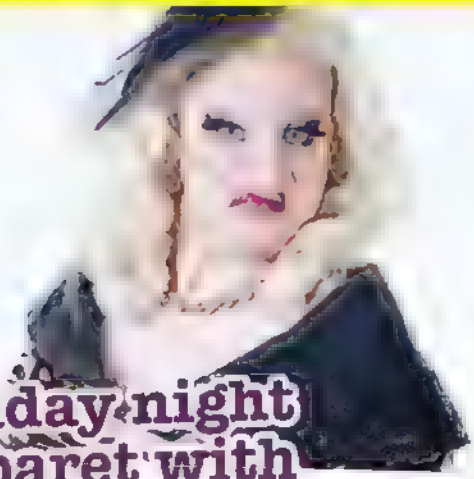
Get ready for DJ Poni at Birmingham's Eden Bar

It's time for another guest DJ at Birmingham's Eden Bar - and this time it's DJ Poni on the decks, providing chart, dance and a huge slice of cheese!
Check out what's sure to be a great party with Garry, Cal and the team.

Saturday 13 January - Eden, Birmingham

What's On

Mon 15 - Sun 21 January



Friday night cabaret with Myra Dubois

Fancy a different start to the weekend? Then head down to Birmingham's award winning Village Inn for a night of action-packed cabaret with the incredible Myra Dubois! Plus, the bar's open until very, very late! Enjoy!

Friday 19 January - The Village Inn, Birmingham

Furry fun with MidsBears!

If you're a bear, or a friend of the bear community at large, then pop down to MidsBears at Eden Bar. The event's been taking place on the fourth Friday of every month, but those crazy guys have decided to mix things up a bit by meeting a Friday early this time round. The furry beasts! Anyway, whichever Friday of the month it happens, it's always a great night out and attracts a fab crowd. Check it out - you'll love it.

Friday 19 January - Eden, Birmingham

Coventry cabaret with Trixie Lee

There's yet another night of cabaret to enjoy at Coventry gay venue The Yard this week! This time it's with the fantastic Trixie Lee! If you haven't visited yet, then why not pop along?

Friday 19 January - The Yard, Coventry

Toni Lee back at Eden Bar!

If you missed the opportunity to party with DJ Toni Lee at Eden Bar earlier in the month, fear not - he's back with his trademark playlists for another great night out!

Saturday 20 January - Eden, Birmingham

Grab a great Sunday roast at The Loft!

Look no further than The Loft for your hangover-soothing Sunday lunch. With an impressive selection of meats available, you'll be hard-pressed to find a better offer.

Every Sunday - The Loft, Birmingham

Leather Social at Birmingham gay bar

Are you a fan of all things leather?..
You are?... Then this is the event for you! The Leather Social returns to Birmingham's Eden Bar on the third Sunday of the month, offering a friendly, relaxed atmosphere in which lovers of leather and their admirers can connect.
Got some leather?... Then what're you waiting for?!

Sunday 21 January - Eden, Birmingham

We are open every day from 2pm

THE BEST CABARET EVERY MONTH

JANUARY @EDEN

eden

IN 2018 WE CELEBRATE OUR 10th BIRTHDAY. AS WELL AS OUR MONTHLY ENTERTAINMENT WE'LL BE HOSTING A FEW SPECIAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR SO WATCH THIS SPACE!

WELCOME TO OUR NEW RESIDENT DJS

DJ TONI LEE

DJ PONI

SAT 6th DJ TONI LEE

SAT 13th DJ PONI

FRI 19th MIDSBEARS

SAT 20th DJ TONI LEE

SUN 21st LEATHER SOCIAL

SAT 27th MARY MAC

TOTALLY TINA AND DJ PONI

EVERY FRI & SUN KARAOKE & DISCO DJ NIKKI

116 Sherlock St. Birmingham, B5 6NB | End of Hurst Street | 0121 622 1953 | www.TheEdenBar.co.uk

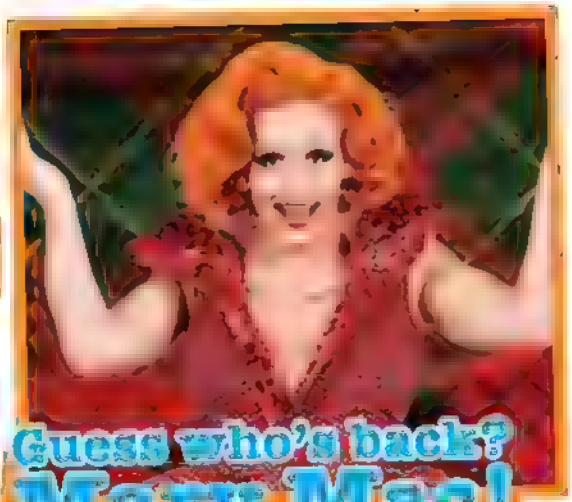
What's On

Mon 22 - Wed 31 January

Girls Aloud star Nadine Coyle heads to Brum!

Nadine Coyle's coming to Brum - and boy, are we excited! Yep, that's right, Girls Aloud favourite Nadine is starring in the Nightingale Club's annual New Year's Eve Re-run event on Saturday 27 January! She'll be playing a set full of Girls Aloud hits and her latest solo stuff. Anybody *not* going?!

Saturday 27 January - The Nightingale, Birmingham



Guess who's back? Mary Mac!

If you're looking for a night of top cabaret, then look no further than the fantastic Mary Mac Scottish drag queen Mary is an Eden Bar favourite and always puts on a hilarious show She's here being joined by the UK's favourite Tina Turner tribute - Totally Tina!

Saathi

Brum's best Asian night is back!

Birmingham's biggest monthly gay Asian club night returns to the Nightingale on the 26th - and as usual looks set to provide a fabulous night out! Taking place between 10pm and 4am, with entry costing just £10, it's a great chance to put on your funkiest clothes and party, party, party!

Friday 26 January - The Nightingale, Birmingham

Who can? Jacquii Cann!

If you're looking for a great night of song, head over to The Yard in Coventry on the last Friday of the month, when Stars In Their Eyes winner Jacquii Cann will be live on stage

Friday 26 January - The Yard, Coventry

Sandra returns to The Village Inn!

The Whore of Hampstead Heath returns home to Birmingham on the 26th for her monthly residency at popular cabaret bar The Village Inn.
Alongside Sandra's games and shenanigans, there are delicious drinks offers to enjoy too, as well as the chance to party through to the crack of dawn.
Go for it!

Friday 26 January - The Village Inn, Birmingham

the yard
FREE ENTRY EVERY NIGHT
THE YARD, 11-12 BULL YARD, COVENTRY, CV1 1LH WWW.THEYARDCOVENTRY.CO.UK
FRIDAY 26TH JANUARY
Karaoke Thursdays
January Cabaret
THE BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT
THROUGH UNTIL 4AM
FRIDAY 12TH JANUARY
TRIXIE LEE
HOSTED BY ROCKELLA BROWN
Winner of
JACQUII CANN

The Loft
George Michael
Saturday 13th January
WWW THELOFTBRUM CO UK
143 BROMSGROVE STREET BIRMINGHAM - 0121 622 2444

MUSEUM & ART GALLERY BIRMINGHAM

FREE ENTRY

Coming Out

SEXUALITY, GENDER & IDENTITY

2 DEC 2017 – 15 APR 2018

A ground-breaking and vital contemporary art exhibition including works by Grayson Perry, Tracey Emin, Andy Warhol, Derek Jarman, Sarah Lucas, David Hockney, Chila Kumari Burman, Sunil Gupta and Steve McQueen.

#ACENationalPartners
#ComingOutBMAG

Arts Council Collection

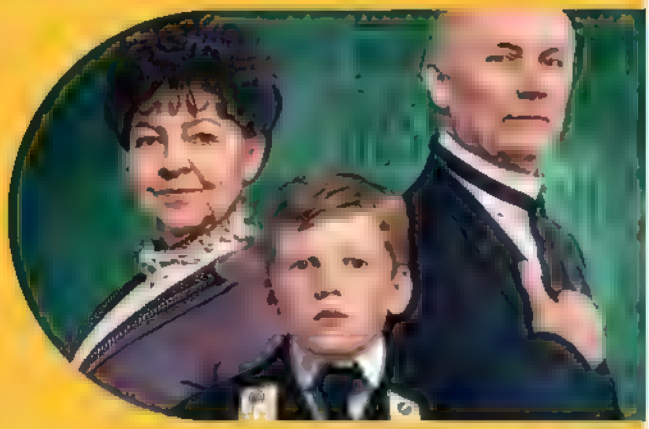
@BM_AG @birmingham_mag
/birminghammuseumandartgallery

birminghammuseums.org.uk

Coming Out is a touring exhibition conceived by National Museums Liverpool, in partnership with Birmingham Museums Trust as part of the Arts Council Collection National Partners Programme 2016–18.

Arts Council Collection is managed by Southbank Centre on behalf of Arts Council England.

A Dramatic New Season At The REP



2 – 17 FEB

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Noël Coward's hauntingly timeless love story brought to life by The REP and Kneehigh Theatre.

21 FEB - 3 MAR

THE WINSLOW BOY

A major new revival of Terence Rattigan's classic family drama

THE REP BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

Birmingham City Council

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What's On

Arts • Theatre • Entertainment

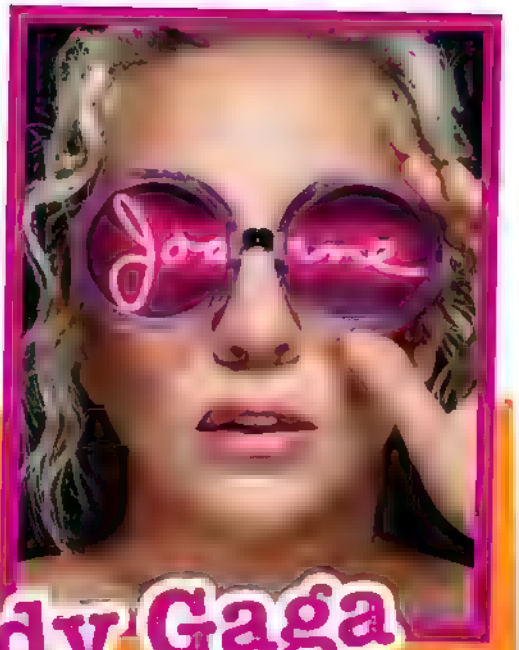
Strictly Come Dancing Live

We all enjoy a sparkling sequin or several, don't we? And where better to find them than on the Strictly Come Dancing Live tour, the in-the-flesh version of the Saturday night light-entertainment television extravaganza adored by millions.

One-time ballet babe and hugely successful children's author Darcey Bussell joins Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood on the judging panel. The show this year features - among other contestants whose names we don't know at the time of going to print - comedian Susan Calman and double paralympic champion Jonnie Peacock.

Reigning Strictly champion Ore Oduba hosts the show. Expect all your favourite routines and no shortage of eye candy...

Friday 19 - Sunday 21 January, Arena Birmingham

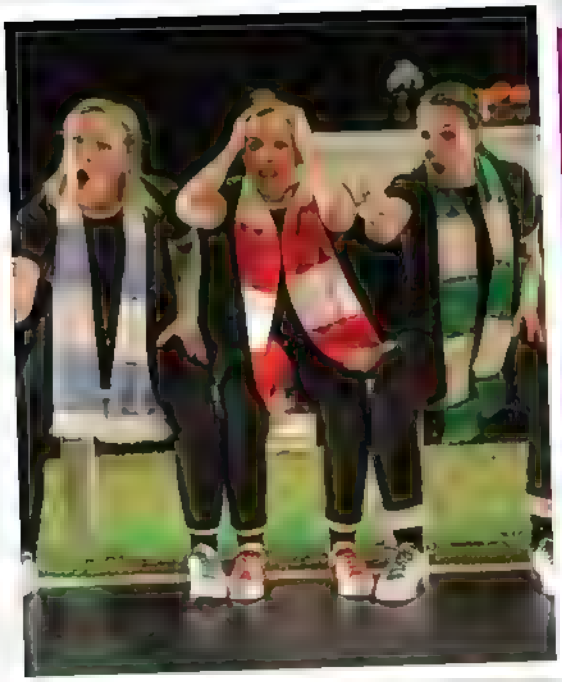


Lady Gaga

Cinderella

With its comical Ugly Sisters, matchmaking fairy godmother, drop dead gorgeous Prince Charming, super-cute mice and its one-foot only glass slipper, Cinderella can justifiably lay claim to being the most popular of all pantomimes. The quirky Danny Mac stars alongside Midlands-born soul diva Beverley Knight in the Hippo Arena production, traditionally the biggest panto in all of panto-land, oh yes it is! Jon Conteh, Joe Dunree and Phil Randall don the glam wigs and altogether unpleasant manner to play those un-so-nasty Uglies.

Tuesday 19 December - Sunday 25 January, Birmingham Hippodrome; Friday 1 December - Saturday 30 January, Nottingham Playhouse



The Beautiful Game

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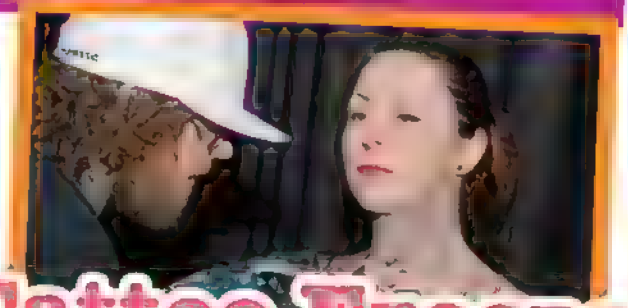
Friday 6 January, Nottingham Playhouse



The Late Marilyn Monroe

Movie icon Tony Curtis once described making love to Marilyn Monroe as being a bit like kissing Hitler
If Tony was right, she presumably must've kept her pencil moustache immaculately bleached throughout her career.
Anyways up, this is the story of Ms Monroe's last day on planet earth - a day which ended with her taking some pills and drifting into eternal sleep while lying on the bed in the nuddy (although conspiracy theorists have long claimed the Kennedys bumped her off, the utter rotters)

Thursday 30 January - Monday 3 February, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

Tattoo Freeze

Following on from the success of previous shows, this specialist two-day event offers members of the general public the chance to get themselves tattooed by one (or more!) of the 200 talented tattooists who'll be in attendance
Show highlights include Katie Dee and her 'burlesque and magical fire show', robot-building, felt & fibre, BMX and circus workshops and a Scalextric rally challenge.
Oh, and there'll be a 10ft python in attendance too - but before you get overly excited, we're referring to the species of reptile there, not somebody's unfeasibly long trouser-snake...

Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 January, Telford International Centre

From Ibiza to the Norfolk Broads

The National Running Show

The Sound Of Music

Rodgers & Hammerstein s hit musical is best known from its mid-1960s film version starring the inimitable Julie Andrews Telling the story of the Von Trapp family's World War Two flight across the mountains of Austria, it features memorable songs like Edelweiss, My Favourite Things, Do Re-Mi, Climb Ev'ry Mountain, The Lonely Goatherd, the title track itself and Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious (or are we getting our Julie Andrews movies mixed up with that last one?... Cor blimey, Mairwee!).

Tuesday 16 - Saturday 20 January,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Coming Out

This show's got a whole two page feature dedicated to it in this issue of Zone - *and* we covered it last month, too - so we won't bang on an awful lot about it here. Suffice to say it's a great opportunity to bag yourself an insight into the way shifting attitudes towards the LGBT experience have influenced visual art since the late 1960s. Check it out. You may even find yourself saying things like, "Ooh well I never knew that!" or "Just look at the flares on that gay!"

Until Sunday 15 April,
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

Quentin Crisp Naked Hope

As camp as Christmas (see what we did there?) Quentin Crisp certainly had a talent for outrageous self-publicity. Back in the mid-20th century, dressing around in fancy make-up and dying your hair crimson was a pretty good way for a gay man to get himself not only noticed but also duffed up on the streets of London - and Quentin certainly bagged a beating or two on route to old fame and fragility of his old age.

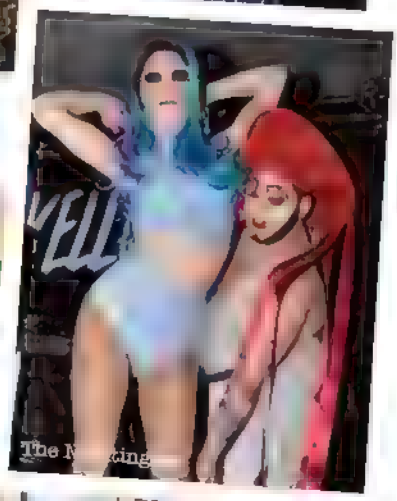
This [illegible] uplifting celebration of the urgent necessity to be your true self is directed by Linda Marlowe - who played Sylvia Carter on EastEnders for more than two years.

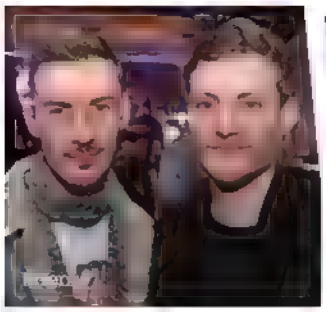
Friday 19 January, Lichfield Garrick

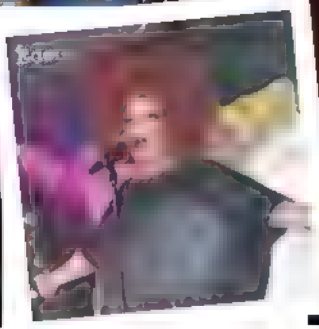
Party all night in vibrant Birmingham

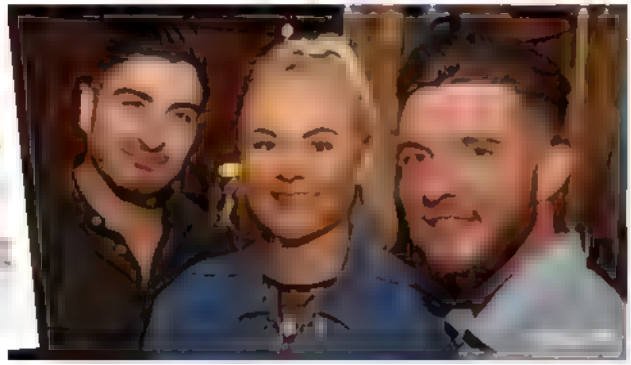
If you're out for the night in Birmingham, then the city's gay scene is a great place to be!

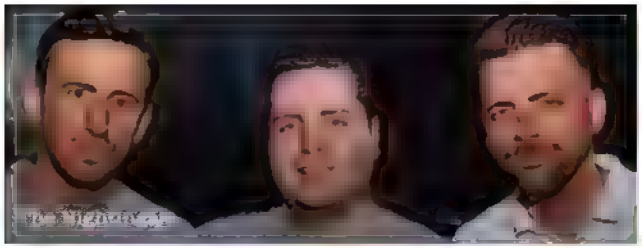
With over 15 bars and clubs to choose from, there really is something for everyone! It's a truly great night out!

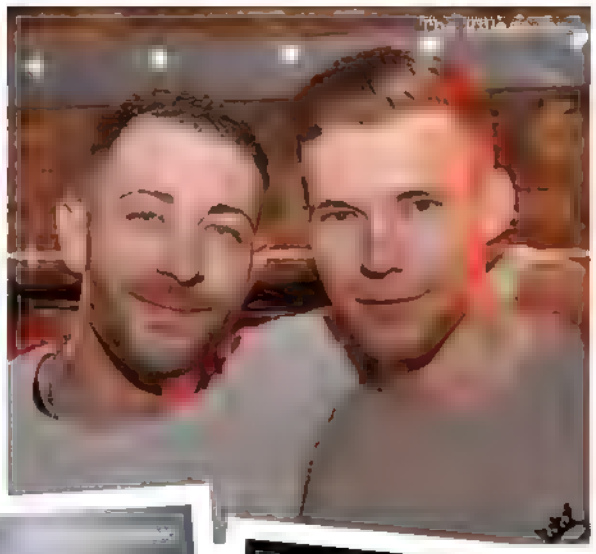


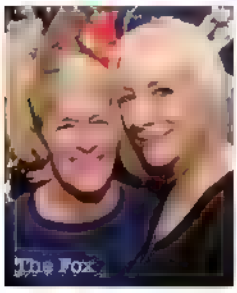


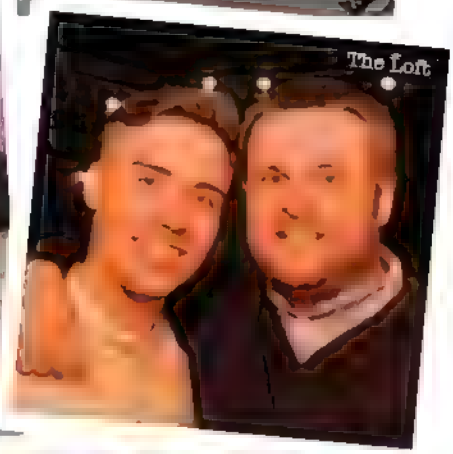


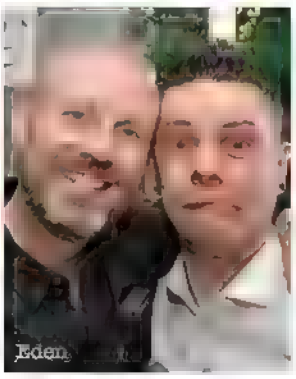






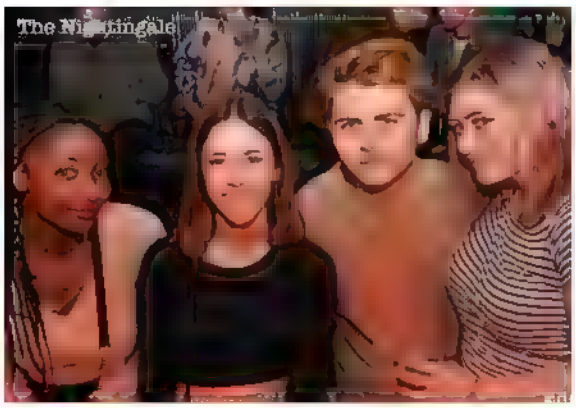


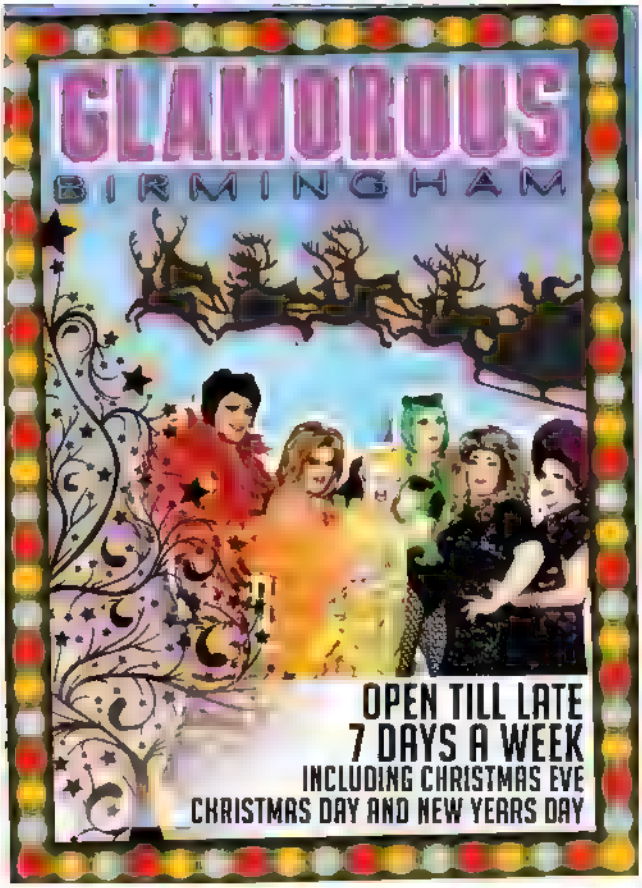




Pictures by Rikki Miles

Party all night in vibrant Birmingham

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WICKED WIZARD OF FIZZOG
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Bollywood Bhangra Rnb Room
SAATHI
Friday 26th January 2018
Nightingale Club

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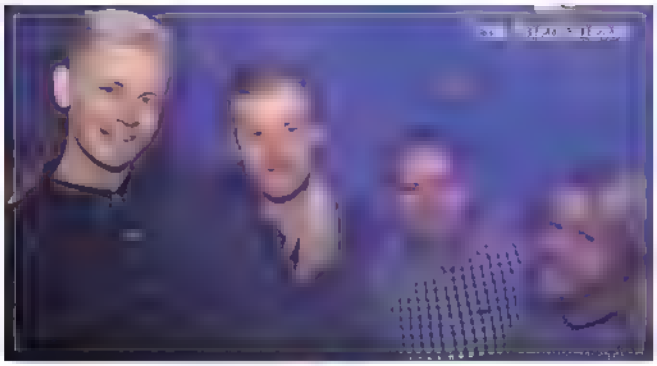
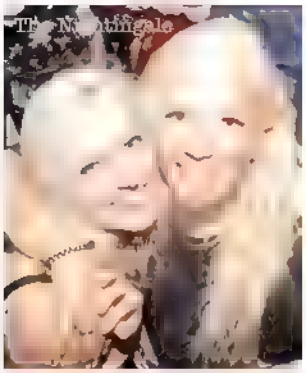
The Loft



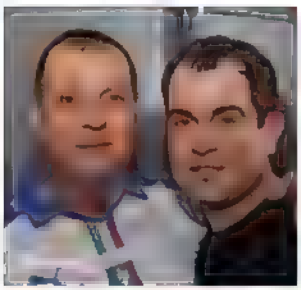


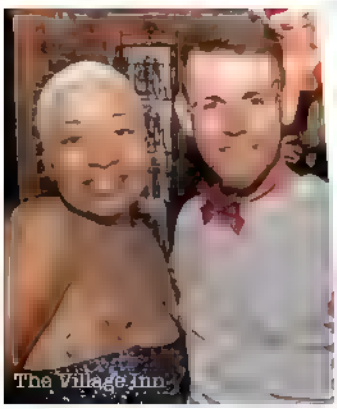
Sidewalk

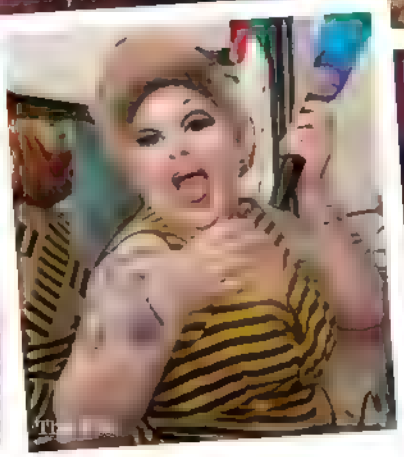
Eden

Eden

The Loft

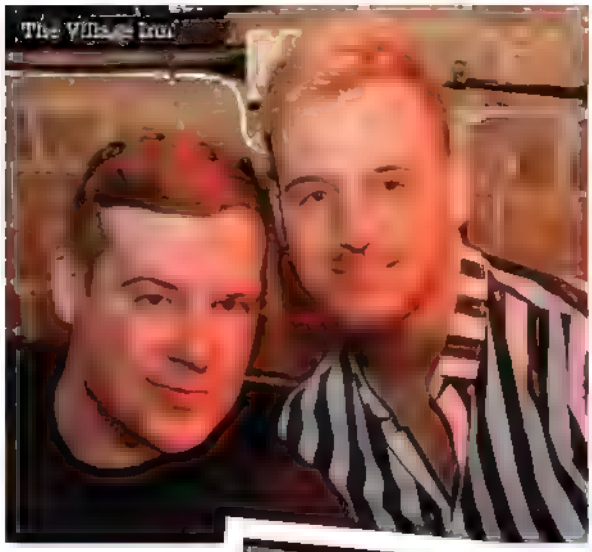


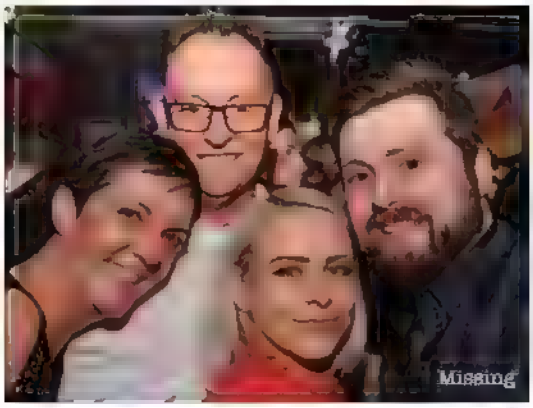

The Village Inn

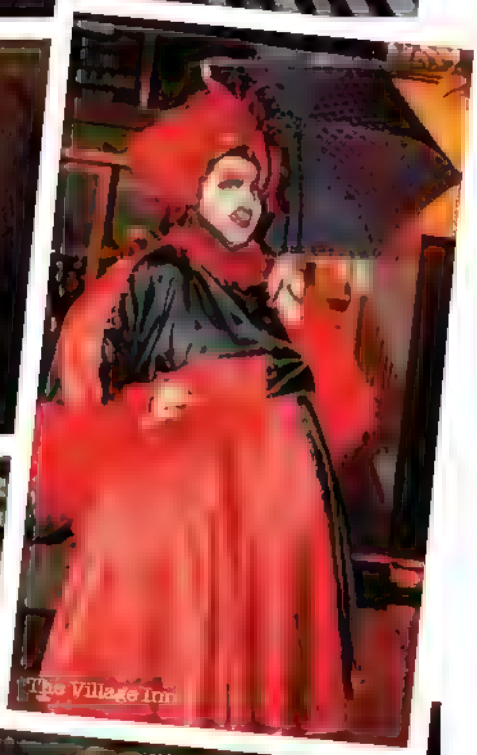


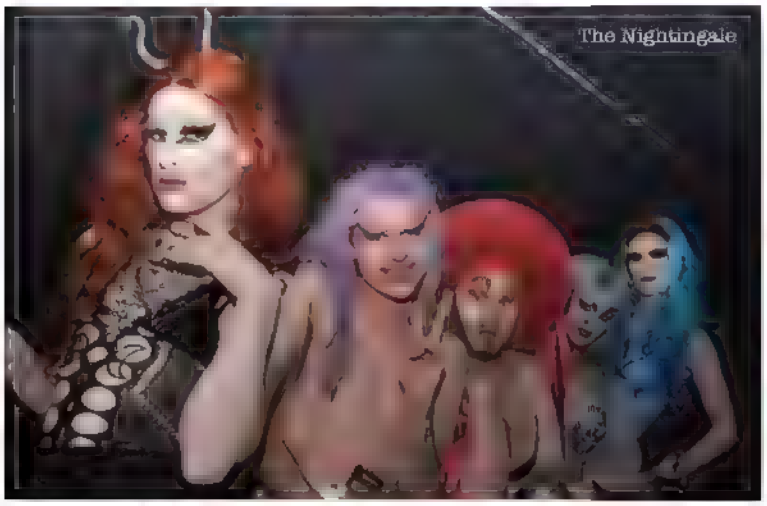
Missing

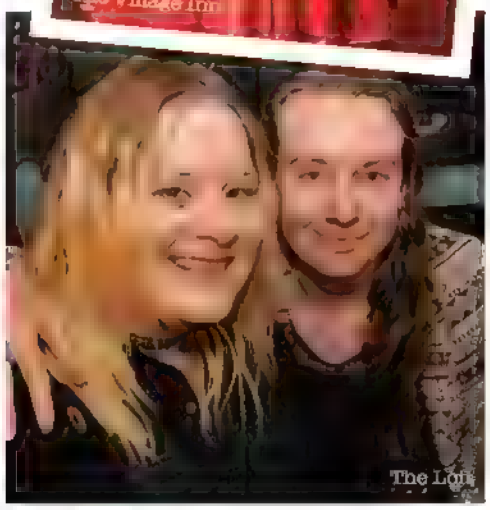
Party all night in & around Birmingham











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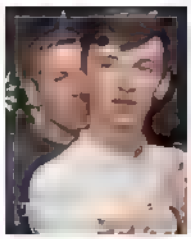
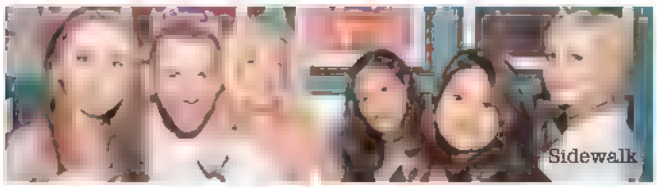
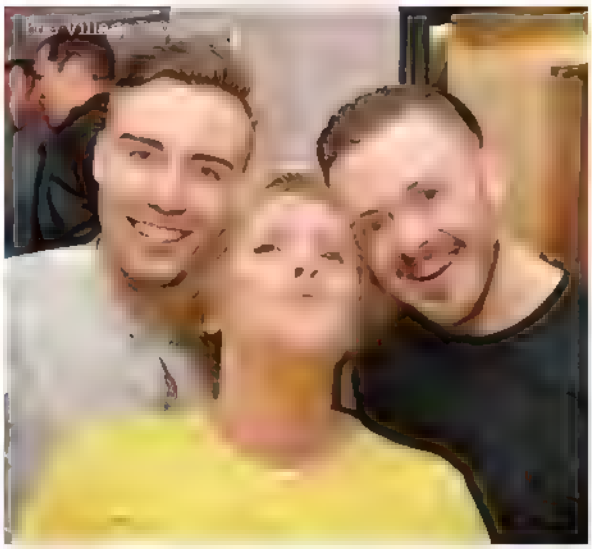
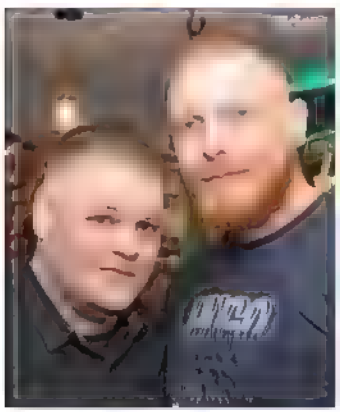
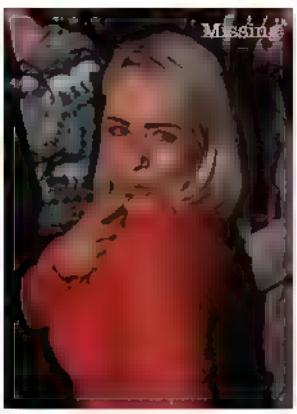
Party all night in vibrant Birmingham







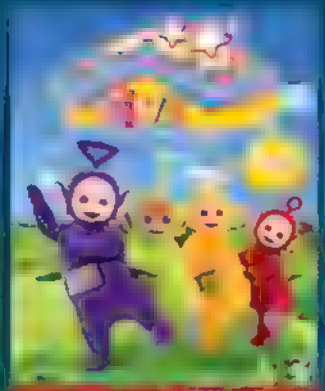




COMING SOON TO THE NEW ALEXANDRA THEATRE

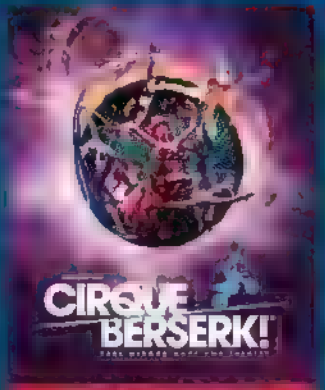
MON 29 JAN – SAT 3 FEB

MON 5 FEB



WED 7 & THU 8 FEB

WED 14 – SUN 25 FEB



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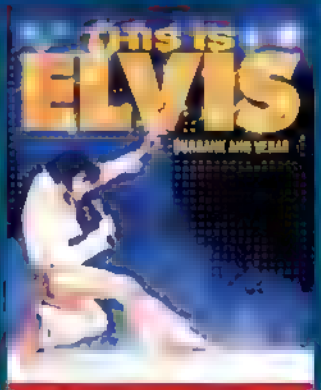

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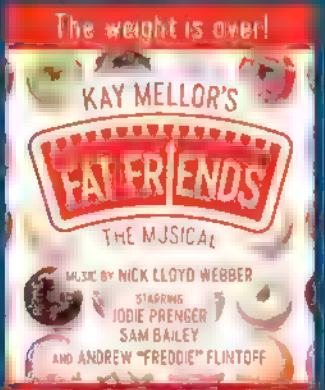
TUE 27 – SAT 31 MAR



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MON 16 – SAT 21 APR

TUE 15 – SAT 19 MAY

MON 20 – SAT 26 MAY

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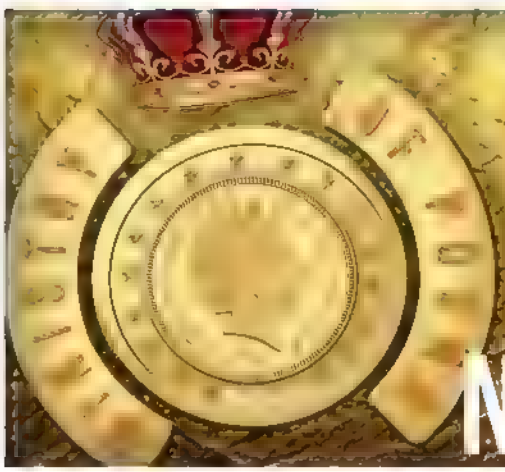

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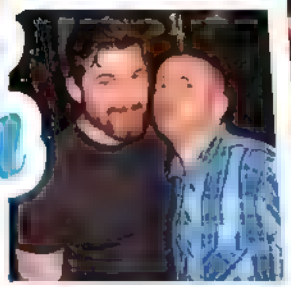
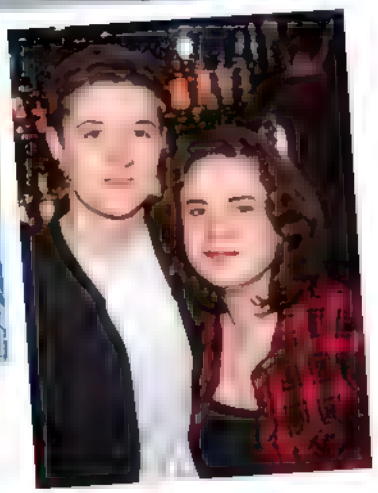
A bostin' night out at The Boston





If you're looking to party in Northampton, head down to local LGBT venue The Boston for an evening of top-class revelry!

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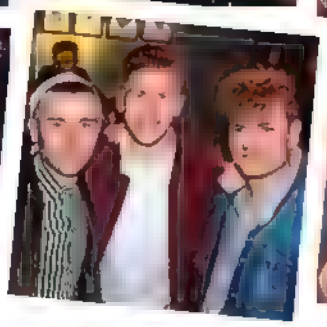

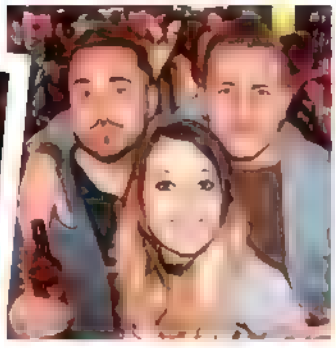

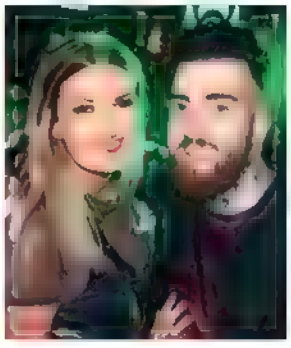

Pictures by The Boston

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WIN! A Cinderella Group Ticket at Birmingham Hippodrome

Hunky Danny Mac is starring alongside Midlands-born soul diva Beverley Knight in Birmingham Hippodrome's 2017/18 panto production of Cinderella - and you could be there to see it!
We've teamed up with the popular Hurst Street venue to offer a group ticket for you and three mates to see the 7.15pm performance of the show on Tuesday 16 January

Traditionally the biggest panto in all of pantoland (oh yes it is!), the Hippodrome production also stars comedian Matt Slack and those long-in-the-tooth Grumbleweeds.

Ceri Dupree and Phil Randall don the giant wigs and altogether unpleasant manner to play the oh-so-nasty Ugly Sisters.

Cinderella runs until Sunday 28 January
To book tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

To enter our not-to-be-missed competition, just visit midlandszone.co.uk and answer the following question.

Which female impersonator stars in Cinderella?

A) Ceri Dupree
B) La Voix
C) Lily Savage

Competition closes on Friday 12 January. Enter online at midlandszone.co.uk

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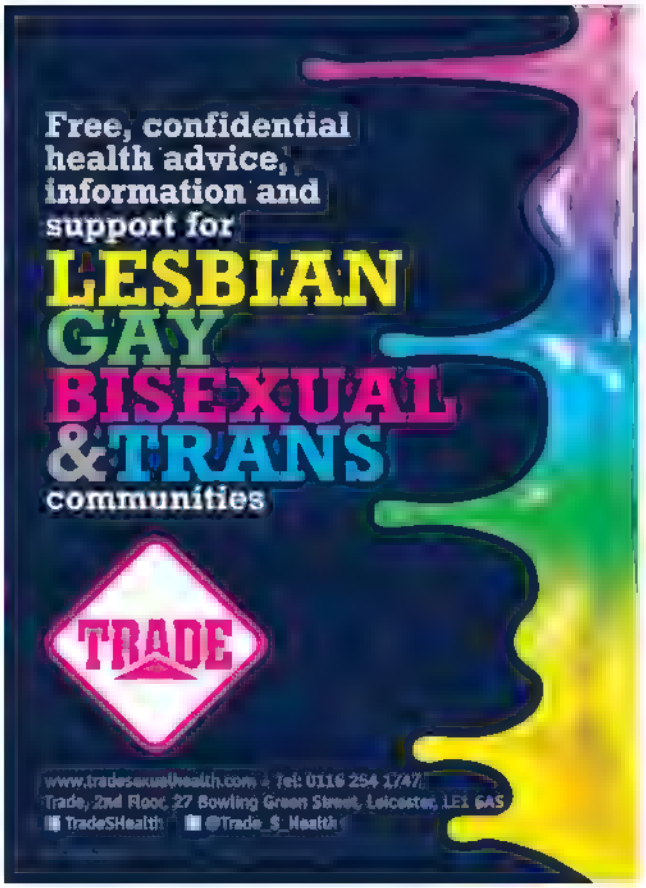
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Food and drink news from across the Midlands...

Birmingham's City Arcade could soon have a new cocktail bar...

Birmingham's City Arcade could soon be home to a new cocktail bar.

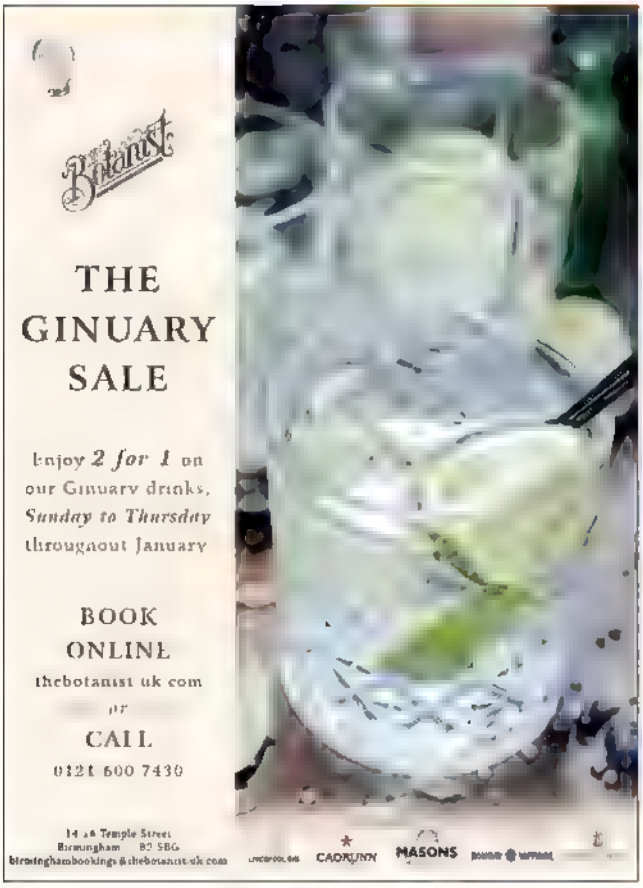
Plans have been submitted to expand above the already operating Tilt Birmingham, which specialises in craft beer, coffee and pinball.

A document submitted to the council by the applicant said: "The business vision is to build upon the success of Tilt and continue to develop a modern multifunctional venue

"Tilt is now firmly established, and the original concept of craft beer, coffee and pinball has been a success and sees growth in sales and popularity.

"The plan now is to develop that concept further and make City Arcade a destination for social interaction.

"Not only that, we will put a modern lease of life into current unusable space."



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LIFE OF A THIRTYSOMETHING GAY

"Smells like community spirit"

What is it about a new year that means, no matter how hard I try not to, I become self reflective? I tell myself it's just another year but nonetheless find myself consumed by an overwhelming desire to contemplate the past as well as look ahead to the future, to rationalise everything and bring order to chaos.

Perhaps it's because we're all obsessed with time. We march to it, we record it, we clock watch it, we talk about it and just occasionally we sometimes forget it. And we spend a lifetime battling against it. Time can be a friend or a bitch, but come what may, we're all inevitably bound to it.

Thinking back, some years were bad, some were good and many mediocre. Yet 2017 was a rollercoaster; a real blast. It was a year that challenged me to put aside my many fears, forget what people thought and just go for it. For too long I'd not pursued an idea or a dream because I was afraid of what others might think. Yet in 2017, I found some inner confi dence with my writing, published a book which is going global, was offered promo opportunities in the day job, upped sticks and left the countryside for the bright lights of the big smoke, and took on a lead role in setting up the first LGBT+ network in the National Trust. Am I proud of myself? Damn right I am. I finally had the strength to hold up two fingers to the naysayers, to school teachers of old who told me I was a nobody, and to the bullies who called me gay, a freak and a corruption of nature.

Launching my book at the magnificent Gloucester Cathedral at the end of November, surrounded by family, friends and members of the general public, was a life-changing moment. It cemented the journey, it shored up the self belief and, more importantly, it gave me faith to al ways ignore the doubters

Of course, despite its magnificent highs, the year also had a few downs Readjusting to city life took a while, but I got there in the end. I lost two good friendships along the way, which was a great disappointment, and producing the book alongside the crazy day job almost pushed me into oblivion. I look older and more knackered for it, but God, I'm happy

Despite the bumps in the road, I've learned to keep on going. I understand more than ever that the buck stops with me, and that only *I* am going to make things happen. A journey worth travelling is likely to be a tough one. Tough is what makes it real, tough is what makes you resilient; tough is what makes you achieve. If there's one piece of advice I would offer as the new year dawns, it's to push yourself beyond your capabilities, forget the naysayers and just go for it.

So as I contemplate 2018, my thoughts turn to where I go next. Nearly two-thirds of Brits make a New Year's resolution. Most of those resolutions are the same - lose weight, get fitter, eat healthier, take yet more care of your appearance and see family and friends more than the year before. These are followed by 'find more time for yourself', 'get a better life/work balance', drink less and stop smoking. But these don't quite cut it for me. They feel a little beige, having tried and failed at them many times before. In fact, stats produced by the Guardian in 2015 showed that most people give up on their resolutions within three weeks, and 86% within three months. I've rarely made it through 12 months

I want 2018's resolutions to be more realistic and more meaningful than my usual half hearted promises. Last year I followed my dreams and they were ex traordinary. This year I can't help but want to give back. So many of us live on hope, so why not help create some hope for others too?

So where do I start? Well, one of my mates is passionate about supporting refugees - in particular women and children - and spends her time at centres around the country and abroad making a real difference. Whilst I've donated a few things in the past to help, I've been amazed by my friend's commitment and determination. I've sat for many hours in the comfort of the local pub listening to her horror stories

Perhaps I should help? Meena is a Birmingham-based centre looking for volunteers and supporters to help displaced women and child refugees. Its website explains its work and is well worth a look.

I also read recently that the rate of homelessness is rising dramatically. No surprise about that, given the economic situation and fears around Brexit - but did you know that 25% of those who're homeless are also LGBT+? There are numerous and often complex reasons why so many LGBT people end up on the streets. I don't know how I can help, but I really want to. There are charities in the city that are working hard every day to make a real difference. Check them out.

Of course, giving back doesn't always mean volunteering. It's with small things that people can often make the biggest differences. Being thoughtful and caring of others, irrespective of our differences, is what makes us richer as people There's an enormous amount to be said for tolerance. So this year, I will remember the neighbours. I will go to the local community shop in Moseley, I will go to the local street party in June and bake cakes and much more besides. In the heart of a thriving city, living and being part of the rich fabric of community life is just as rewarding as publishing a book.

I wish you all a Happy New Year, folks. Let's make 2018 a good one!

CAT'S CORNER

"New Year's Resolution"

It is surely one of the greatest unfairnesses of life that the New Year rears its head just a week after the excesses of the festive season. And it happens every single year. Christmas doesn't even have the decency to be a moveable feast like Easter, which always catches me by surprise, or Passover or Eid or Hanukkah - in fact any of the major celebrations. No, Christmas sits there the week before New Year and stubbornly refuses to move.

And where does this leave us? With a miserable January. January, while it seems important as it heralds the new year for much of the world, is always the most pitiful of months.

For one, since about August we've been persuaded to spend as much money as possible on Christmas because, you know, it's not going to happen again ever, until next year. So we're financially f*cked. And secondly, we've been partying for over a week non-stop and had to stay up until at least midnight on New Year's Eve, so our bodies are f*cked. And then, to make matters far worse, when we're in this terrible state, we've had to write our New Year resolutions.

This is the real killer. When you've overspent, over-partied and are probably looking for another job because of what happened with the photocopier at the Christmas works do, you have to write down what you have to do to make yourself a better person: stare harsh reality in the face and work out how you're going to get more money, lose more weight, replace whisky with smoothies, replace smoking with marathon running, be nicer to your relatives and adopt poorly puppies.

It's cruelty beyond measure. And essentially doomed. I've never met anyone who successfully achieved any New Year resolution which had any value. I've known lots of people who've transformed their lives and their happiness, of course, but they've all tended to set about it in the spring, when things aren't so miserable and there's money about to spend on vegetables and nicotine patches.

This year, I'm taking matters into my own hands and have postponed the whole thing. I've given myself three months to recover from the excesses of December and to generally feel happy with the inadequate person that I am. I will then make my resolutions for the start of April 2018, when the daffodils are showing and it's too late to do anything stupid like enter a marathon.

Be nice to yourself in 2018! Happy New Year!

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ON THE BALL

with Steve Ball

Here's hoping...

It's once again time to try and make New Year resolutions. Too often I've made over-ambitious ones, so this time I'm going to try to keep it simple...

#1. Less phone. Despite many attempts to ditch the apps, the increasing amount of time I spend on social media makes me anti-social. It's not unusual for me to find myself sitting in a bar staring into my phone screen whilst many around me are doing the same. If you catch me doing so, tell me to get a real life, not a virtual one!

#2. Eat and drink less. Every new year I commit to going on a diet. It never lasts. This year, I'm going to reject the faddy diets and instead simply try to eat less, with smaller portions and fewer snacks. I'll also try to cut down on alcohol; I've never been a heavy drinker and my mates tell me I'm a lightweight, but most weeks I drink more than the recommended 14 units of alcohol that men and women are supposed to stick to.

#3 Talk positive. I shall start, and be more open to, conversations about mental health, a subject around which there's still too much stigma. Mental illness is something which affects LGBTs disproportionately. LGBT youths, for example, are four times more likely to kill themselves than their heterosexual counterparts. More than half of individuals who identify as transgender experience depression or anxiety. And even amongst the staff of LGBT campaign group Stonewall, 86% have experienced mental health issues first-hand.

#4 Keep up with friends and family. It's a year since I lost my dad. The first anniversary is a poignant reminder of the importance of family. We don't always find it easy to get along with our families (I was estranged from mine for a while in my 20s), but blood is thicker than water, and for many of us, families provide strength and a sense of belonging. So I shall keep in touch more with mine, and with my friends.

Let's see how many of these resolutions I'm able to keep. In the meantime, though, whatever your New Year resolutions may be, here's hoping you have a happy and healthy 2018.

THE VIRAL ROUND-UP

Here's what we've been looking at online...

We all do it - spend hours on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Often we're distracted from what we should be doing by cat videos and funny pranks - or by something feelgood that's been shared so much on the net it's officially classed as 'viral'. Well, here are some of Midlands Zone's favourites from the past month!

Hockey club release **NAKED CALENDAR** in the name of LGBT sports inclusivity

It's not just the local Warwick Rowers who've released a naked calendar for 2018. Australian LGBT-inclusive hockey club Perth Pythons have launched one too. It's one of the hottest we've ever seen - and all in the name of LGBT sports inclusivity! And it's not just for the guys either - the team is mixed, so the calendar features both men and women. Check it out at **perthpythons.com/pridecalendar**

The **Wobbling Willy** is taking the internet by storm!

Ever fancied a dildo with your head on it? Us neither.
But guess what? In 2018, it's a reality! May we introduce you to... the Wobbling Willy!
It's a silicone-bodied dildo with a personalised caricature head. Interested parties can simply upload their photo, and the Swedish company that creates the product will sculpt a caricature head and mount it on the end of a bright purple dildo.
It even comes with a faux suede pouch and instructions. Why? We don't know! Get yours at **wobblingwilly.com**

CELEB SNAPS!

Our fave celebrity Instagram pics...

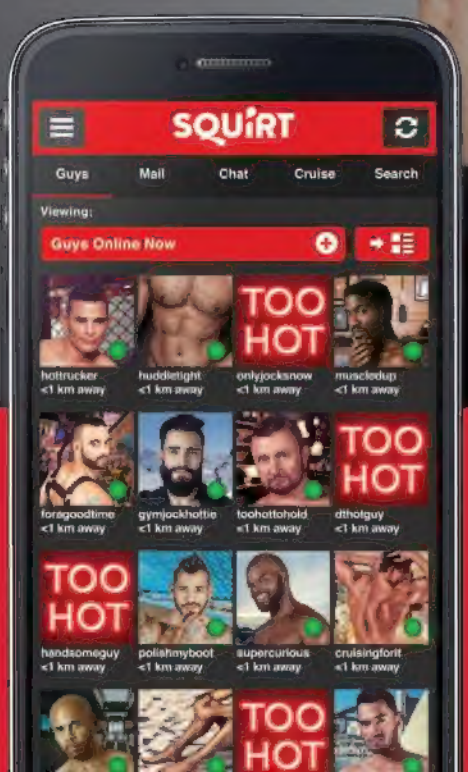
Gaga looked great while getting into the festive spirit in December!

We want Beyoncé's legs!

CUTE DAD ALERT!
Meet Cristiano Ronaldo

SQUiRT .org

TOO HOT for the app store



Visit **www.squirt.org** to hook up today

NADINE

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